MARTIN MALIA: WHY THE WEST HATES YELTSIN

FEBRUARY 10, 1992 · $2.95

THE NEW REPUBLIC

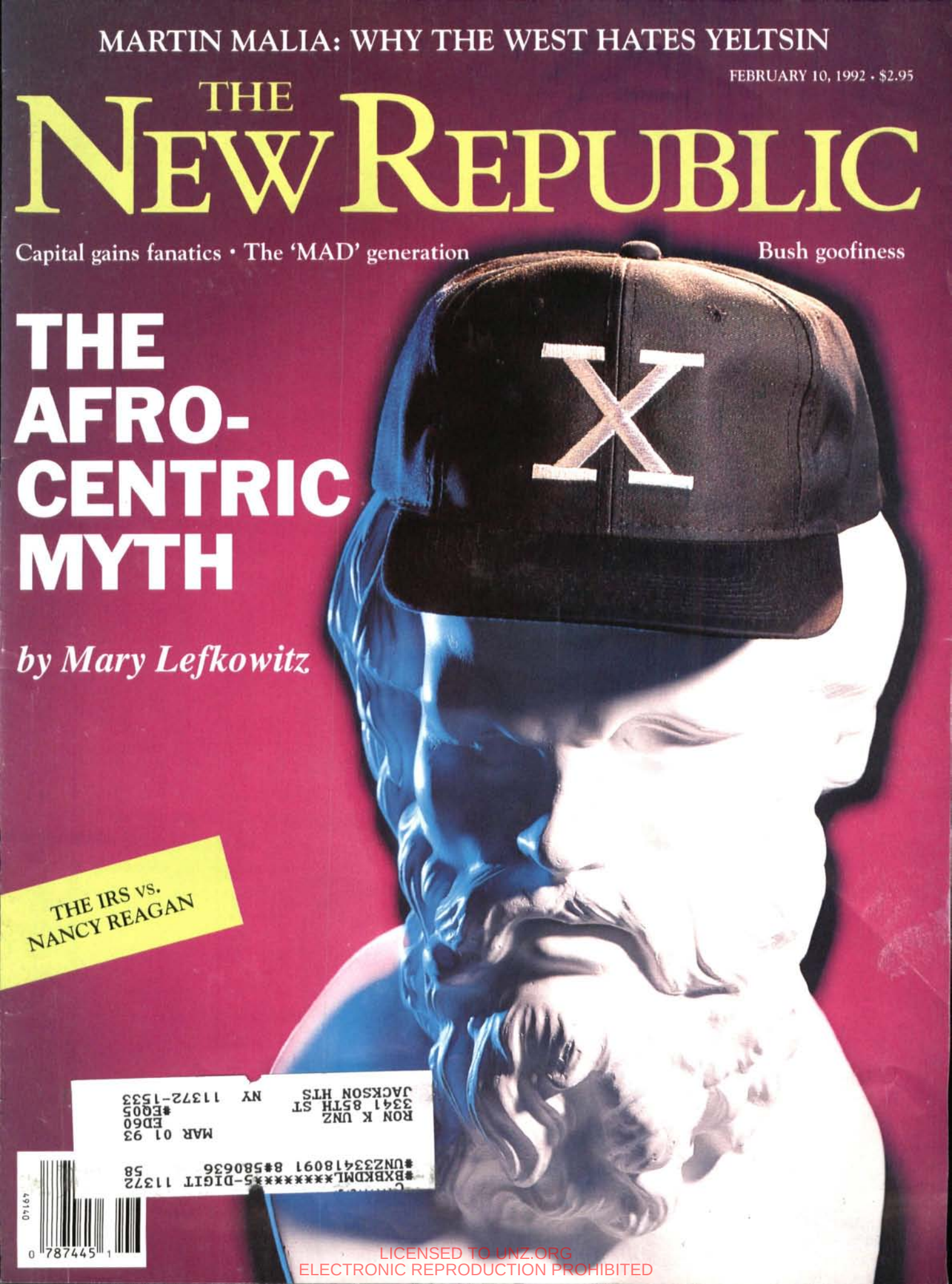
Capital gains fanatics · The 'MAD' generation

Bush goofiness

THE AFRO-CENTRIC MYTH

by Mary Lefkowitz

THE IRS vs. NANCY REAGAN



RON K UNZ
3341 85TH ST
JACKSON HTS NY 11372-1533
MAR 01 93
ED60
#EQ05
#UNZ3341809 1 8#5806 36 58
#BXBKDML*********5-DIGIT 11372
0 787445 1
49140

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How Long Does It Take a Five-Year-Old To Get Ready For School?

Getting a child ready for school doesn't happen in a single morning.

How ready children are to learn depends on how well they've been cared for in their preschool years.

Children lacking parental attention, proper nutrition, health care, or stable homes are ill-prepared for a lifetime of learning. So are children suffering from emotional or physical abuse.

If we are to succeed as a nation, we must provide every child with the best start possible, by expanding prenatal, nutritional, health, and child care programs to protect and heal all of America's children.

In February of 1990, President Bush and the nation's governors adopted six education goals for America. Goal number one: "By the year 2000, all children will start school ready to learn."

Meeting that goal will require new commitments of time, leadership, and financial resources. And it will require immediate action at all levels. Either we make the required investments now, or we pay the price later, because many things in life can wait – but our children can't.

nea

National Education Association
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
(202) 822-7200

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FEBRUARY 10, 1992

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,021

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN

Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER

Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN (on leave)

Acting Managing Editor
JACOB WEISBERG

Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL, HENDRIK HERTZBERG, ANN HULBERT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, MORTON KONDRACKE, ROBERT WRIGHT

Editor, New Republic Books (Basic Books)
PETER EDIDIN

Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD

Art
MARK STEVENS

Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Contributing Editors
ELIOT A. COHEN, ROBERT COLES, STANLEY CROUCH, JAMES K. GLASSMAN, JOHN B. JUDIS, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, ROBERT KUTTNER, VINT LAWRENCE, LOUIS MENAND, ADAM MICHNIK, ROBERT B. REICH, JONATHAN RIEDER, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, E.V. THAW, NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN, MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD

Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY

Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY

Associate Managing Editors
KAREN LEHRMAN, LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH

Assistant Literary Editor
ALEXANDER STAR

Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE

Assistant Production Manager
ANGELINA HAN

Production Associate
AMY E. KNOX

Reporter-Researchers
ANDREW BATES, JONATHAN BINES, MATTHEW LEVIE, MATTHEW REES

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH

Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON

Associate Publisher-Marketing
PAUL J. VIZZA

Associate Publisher-Circulation
H. EDWARD YOUNG, JR.

Controller
JEAN GANDY

Advertising Director
JENNIFER BARRETT

Director of Joint Advertising Sales
JAMES J. McCABE

Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER

Circulation Manager
PATTI NAJDA

Advertising Assistant
CECELIA M. STEPHENS

Accounting Assistant
CHRISTINE SCHAUT

Back Issues and Reception
CAROLYN PARHAM

Cover by Jim Holloway for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 29.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Alan Dershowitz again, the October Surprise again, &c.

6 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** TRB: DEMOCRATIC MISTAKES Will they blow it? Let me count the ways.

7 **THE EDITORS** THE CARING PRESIDENT The latest incarnation of George Bush.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Freedom of religion in China, UFOs at Harvard Med School, &c.

10 **FRED BARNES** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: CRY FOR ME The drift—and goofiness—continue.

11 **DOUGLAS G. McGRATH** THE SHRUB FILE The as yet undisclosed diaries of a White House Secret Service agent, recently returned from Japan.

12 **JAY PETERZELL** DESIGNING WOMAN How the IRS busted Nancy Reagan.

14 **JOANNA PITMAN** TOKYO POSTCARD: REPENTANCE The Japanese aren't much interested in an aging war criminal who remembers the rape of Nanking.

15 **JAMES K. GLASSMAN** NO MONEY DOWN A miracle deficit cure.

17 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** A CAPITAL GAINS PRIMER The last, the very last, argument you'll ever have to read against cutting the capital gains tax.

21 **MARTIN MALIA** THE YELTSIN REVOLUTION Everything that has happened so far in the former Soviet Union was a prelude to the great experiment now beginning. So why has the West suddenly lost interest? A case for support.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: TWO WOMEN Glimpses into troublesome history: Judit Elek's *Memoirs of a River* and Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust.*

27 **HERBERT MUSCHAMP** ON ARCHITECTURE: THE WRONG PRESCRIPTION Hold the steamshovels: plans to add to Louis Kahn's Salk Institute would violate the spectacular building.

29 **MARY LEFKOWITZ** NOT OUT OF AFRICA The Afrocentrists' claim that Greek culture was stolen from the Africans is a new mythology, not new history. Why the question of cultural influence cannot be reduced to a racist conspiracy.

35 **STEVEN CRAMER** POEM *The Storyline*

36 **LUC SANTE** WHAT, ME WORRY? *The World of Charles Addams*, introduction by Wilfrid Sheed; *Completely Mad: A History of the Comic Book and Magazine* by Maria Reidelbach

38 **RICHARD HOWARD** UNSENTIMENTAL EDUCATION *By With To & From: A Lincoln Kirstein Reader* edited by Nicholas Jenkins

41 **MARTIN PERETZ** CAMBRIDGE DIARIST: GAME THEORY

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 206, Number 6, Issue 4,021, February 10, 1992. (Printed in the U.S. on January 22, 1992.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 6 & 13, July 13 & 20, Aug. 17 & 24, and Sept. 7 & 14, 1992) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic/National Review joint advertising (212) 702-4882. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1991 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Bar mitzvah boys

To the editors:

In "The Big Easy" (December 16), James Cramer misquotes my *New York Times* ad when he says that in it I claim that "Stewart, and his book, is anti-Semitic." Here is precisely what I said:

> The Stewart book too, invokes religious stereotypes. Its very title—*Den of Thieves*—comes from the New Testament story of Jesus chasing the Jewish moneylenders out of the Temple. Virtually all of the characters Stewart has chosen to write negatively about happen to be Jewish. They are often gratuitously identified by their religion—"Jewish upbringing," "stereotypically Jewish urban backgrounds," "mostly Jewish financiers," "mostly Jewish fraternity" and "Orthodox Jewish schooling"—although the relevance of these characteristics is rarely explored. The social events described are almost always "bar mitzvahs," "bat mitzvahs," "Jewish weddings," and "Jewish dinners" (given "to impress wealthy Jewish investors"). These events generally reflect "a gross display of bad taste." One inside trader is quoted as saying, "I knew after I was bar mitzvahed that there was an inside track," implying that Jewish kids are somehow taught to cheat as soon as they come of age. Stewart's fixation on bar mitzvahs—he falsely claims that even Milken's legal strategy was plotted at his "son's bar mitzvah"—makes it sound like Jews attend no other social functions! The positive characters are largely non-Jewish and Stewart goes out of his way to make that point: "A non-Jew from Cincinnati," "Methodist," "tough Irishman," "Catholic," and "Patrician." The non-Jews are described as "scrupulously honest," "urbane," "soft-spoken" and having "unshakeable integrity," in sharp contrast with the Jews who have "loose mores," "ugly, nakedly aggressive tactics" and are "sinister" and "wheeler-dealers."

These quotes—most of which are Stewart's own gratuitous characterizations—put the lie to Cramer's claim that "almost all of [Stewart's] religious references (and they are very few in a very large book) come from the quotes of the Jews he interviewed." Nonsense. They came from Stewart himself.

Cramer deliberately distorts my own statements regarding Michael Milken before I agreed to represent him, by omitting the following:

> It was the wrong sentence. Ten years is too harsh especially when comparing it to other cases and the degree of culpability ... (*New York Times*, November 23, 1990)
>
> "There must be some rational alternative to sending ... Michael Milken to prison for ten years.
> (*Boston Herald*, December 3, 1990)

I am of course far better informed about the specifics of the case, now that I have read the record. I wish Cramer, too, had read the record, instead of relying on the misinformation contained in the flawed book of his former colleague, James Stewart.

ALAN M. DERSHOWITZ
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Abortion as contraception

To the editors:

Walter Dellinger's confusing article on President Bush and abortion counseling ("Gag Me with a Rule," January 6 & 13) typifies the tortured logic pro-choice zealots are forced to adopt in order to justify their defense of unrestricted abortions. Dellinger whines that Ronald Reagan's executive order, which to date has withstood both a Supreme Court challenge and a congressional override attempt, is somehow undemocratic. This pathetic argument is no more valid now than when it was used over 100 years ago against Lincoln. Elected on an anti-slavery platform, he single-handedly freed the slaves with an executive order called the Emancipation Proclamation. I guess it all comes down to whose ox is being gored.

The ox in this case is the massively funded, inept federal family planning empire. Recognizing their colossal failure at preventing unwanted pregnancies, agencies such as Planned Parenthood saw the need to use abortion as a form of birth control in order to mitigate the disaster. But abortion as birth control was not the intent of Congress when it adopted Title X of the Public Health Services Act in 1970. While technically correct that the Act does not bar abortion counseling, Dellinger neglects to mention that this legislation was enacted three years before *Roe* v. *Wade*. No one in 1970 thought of killing the unborn as a means of family planning. My, how we've progressed.

PHILIP BRAVERMAN
Houston, Texas

Surprise, surprise (cont'd)

To the editors:

In their October Surprise story, "The Conspiracy That Wasn't" (November 18), Steven Emerson and Jesse Furman alleged that I had stated that Iranian arms dealer Cyrus Hashemi was "murdered to shut him up about what he knew about the October Surprise and that the U.S. government has covered up his murder." Responding to this and other gross inaccuracies in that article, I wrote (Correspondence, December 23 & 30) that I had never made any such statement and never held this ludicrous opinion.

At that point, Emerson and Furman could have admitted that they had made a mistake. Instead, Emerson went back to his notebook and returned with a new version of the opinion that I never held. He now insists that when he talked to me I "specifically characterized Hashemi's death as 'suspicious,' 'mysterious,' and 'something that should be investigated.'"

This too is a fabrication and doesn't even support his earlier invention. To say a death is "mysterious" and deserves investigation is *not* the same as saying someone has been murdered to protect the October Surprise and that the U.S. government had covered up the murder. Emerson apparently has no information to support his first lie about me. So he simply shifts it.

As for his new, modified smear, he is apparently taking words from our discussion of why Jamshid Hashemi, Cyrus's brother, had begun talking in 1990 about events of a decade earlier. I said to Emerson that Jamshid had told PBS "Frontline" that one reason he decided to speak out was that he, Jamshid, suspected that his brother had been murdered and that he felt a family responsibility to discover the truth.

Although this was clearly a discussion about Jamshid Hashemi's opinion, Emerson chose to take the words out of Jamshid's mouth and put them in mine. To distort reality even further, Emerson wildly exaggerated Jamshid's sentiments—to make them seem silly and preposterous—before attributing them to me.

ROBERT PARRY
Arlington, Virginia

Steven Emerson replies:

If Parry wants to change his original position on Cyrus Hashemi, that's fine. But the notes of my interview with him clearly show that Parry subscribed to a conspiracy theory about Cyrus Hashemi's death:

> EMERSON: "Do you accept the coroner's report that attributed Cyrus's death to a virulent strain of leukemia?"
> PARRY: "The death was mysterious."
> EMERSON: "How?"
> PARRY: "It was very suspicious."
> EMERSON: "How so?"
> PARRY: "Someone just doesn't die like that—it just doesn't make any sense—it [Cyrus's death] is something that should be investigated."
> EMERSON: "Why?"
> PARRY: "The autopsy report shows strange marks on the body."
> EMERSON: "Like what?"
> PARRY: "I'm not going to get into it but it's very possible that his death was deliberate."
> EMERSON: "Why would someone have killed Hashemi?"

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

PARRY: "He knew too much."
EMERSON: "Like what?"
PARRY: "Well, he had all these dealings with Casey."

Parry never told me nor are there any notes to reflect his alleged statement that Jamshid decided to speak out because he "suspected that his brother had been murdered."

Rapped (cont'd)

To the editors:

In the interest of maintaining my credibility, I'd like to respond to the exchange of letters between Jon Shecter and David Samuels (Correspondence, December 16). Contrary to Samuels's assertion, I would never have told him that the Beastie Boys' *Licensed to Ill* was the first rap album to sell over a million copies. What I told him is that upon its release *Licensed to Ill* quickly became the *largest-selling* rap album ever. In fact, Run-DMC's *Raising Hell*, released in May 1986 and certified "platinum" in July 1986, was the first rap album to sell over a million copies. The same group's *King of Rock*, released in January 1985, was certified platinum in February 1987. The Beasties' album was released in October 1986 and certified platinum in February 1987. It's also worth noting that "The Breaks," a 12-inch single (not an album) by African-American rapper Kurtis Blow, was certified platinum in August *1980*.

At the time of my interview with Samuels, I was relying on my memory for this information. I have since confirmed it with the Recording Industry Association of America, the organization that certifies album sales achievements.

BILL ADLER
New York, New York

Uninvited

To the editors:

In "Party Pooper" (January 6 & 13), Matthew Levie barely begins to tell the tale of how the two major parties collude to prevent upstarts with innovative or challenging ideas from gaining access to the ballot. In Florida, only two third-party candidates (besides presidential candidates) have appeared on a statewide ballot since the 1920s. South Dakota just granted the Libertarian Party ballot status, the first third party in that state since 1932. A 1986 Pennsylvania law requires third parties to register 15 percent of voters statewide to retain ballot status; Maryland requires a 10 percent registration rate; Louisiana requires

continued on page 40

The most challenging, exciting, and profound book you will read this year

"Bold, lucid, scandalously brilliant.
Until now the triumph of the West was merely a fact. Fukuyama has given it a deep and highly original meaning."
—CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

"He takes up where de Tocqueville left off...
With one now-famous essay, Frank Fukuyama did what had hitherto seemed almost impossible: he made Washington think. His subject was, and in this far more sweeping book is, the place of America, and the American idea, in the stream of history. His conclusion is at once exhilarating and sobering."
—GEORGE F. WILL

"A bold and brilliant work. Very, very impressive."
—IRVING KRISTOL

"...a fascinating historical and philosophical setting for the twenty-first century."
—TOM WOLFE

"With clarity and an astonishing sweep of reflection and imagination...
Fukuyama tells us where we were, where we are, and most important, speculates about where we will likely be..."
—ALLAN BLOOM

"Arms Western political thought with new fundamental theoretical arguments to reinforce its practical actions."
—EDUARD SHEVARDNADZE

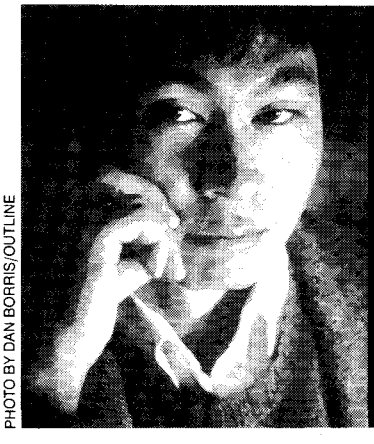


PHOTO BY DAN BORRIS/OUTLINE

Francis Fukuyama
THE END OF HISTORY AND THE LAST MAN

SELECTED BY THE BOOK-OF-THE-MONTH CLUB
At bookstores now or call 1-800-323-7445 to place your credit card order

FP THE FREE PRESS
A Division of Macmillan, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Democratic mistakes

At the Democratic candidates' debate in New Hampshire on January 19, moderator Cokie Roberts began with a question to all the boys: "It is January 20, 1993. Last October, despite the best efforts of the Bureau of Labor Statistics to disguise it, the unemployment rate went to double digits. That's why you're president. What are you going to do within the next week to ease the sufferings of the families of the unemployed?"

Never has a group of politicians been better prepared for a question from a journalist. This is their favorite theme. Why, to end this recession they will move mountains, cut taxes, build highways, never rest, do wondrous things.

There's just one trouble: chances are the country will not be in a recession next January. In fact, although economics is an inexact art, there is surely less than a 50-50 chance that we will be in a recession at the time of the general election campaign next fall. Cokie Roberts's double-digit unemployment by October is very unlikely to materialize. Yet all the Democratic candidates are campaigning on promises to cure a terrible problem that probably won't exist when (to be crude) the Democratic nominee will need it most. When the likely turnaround comes, today's applause lines will suddenly sound hollow.

Of course the recession is the cause of President Bush's drop in the polls, and of the Democrats' revived hopes. Only 19 percent of the voters now have confidence in Bush's handling of the economy. But that number can bounce back as fast as it sank, and probably will if the Democrats keep harping on recession, recession, recession.

The Wall Street Journal reports that orders for Coca-Cola at McDonald's are on the rise—apparently a highly sensitive leading indicator. But even if the economy continues to deteriorate for the next few months, and unemployment is higher come fall than it is now, that won't matter much politically if the corner has been turned and things are improving by then. What counts most in voter psychology is the direction the economy is moving in. After all, even today the GNP is higher than it was not only in earlier recessions, but throughout most of the fondly remembered 1980s boom.

All this is not to say we have no long-term economic problems, or to excuse George Bush from blame for them. But the long-term case is the one the Democrats should be building today—not merely because it's true but also because it probably will be the only case available to them in the fall.

And speaking of odds, what odds would you give that Saddam Hussein will still be on his perch come general election season? *The New York Times* reports that the Saudis are egging the Bush administration to use American air power in aid of rebels trying to topple Saddam. On television, Defense Secretary Dick Cheney emphasizes Hussein's tenuous hold on power. Adding together the chance of something befalling Saddam without further American intervention and the strong temptation of George Bush to step in and end this embarrassment, chances are no better than even that Saddam will still be in power in the fall.

For that practical reason, Democrats are unwise to make an issue of the defeatus interruptus in Iraq—especially those Democrats who opposed the enterprise to begin with. If they goad Bush into doing something dramatic close to election time, they may actually succeed in turning Americans' short attention span for matters foreign—currently a valuable Democratic advantage, as the country forgets what obsessed it just a year ago—into a disadvantage again.

Another tactical error is one the Democratic candidates haven't made yet but are probably about to. Leaks have been dribbling into the newspapers about Bush's forthcoming State of the Union address. Apparently he will deal with health care by proposing new tax breaks for the poor and the middle class. That's the usual Republican stuff. More interesting, he reportedly will propose to pay for these ideas, in part, by limiting the tax deductibility of employer-paid health insurance.

One leak has it as a $4,000 annual ceiling on what employers can deduct for employees making over $100,000 a year. Another leak has it that insurance benefits over $2,000 will be treated as taxable income to employees making over $90,000. Whatever. Bush also is said to be thinking of doubling or even tripling the Medicare premium (currently $32 a month) for old folks with incomes over $100,000.

Democrats will be strongly tempted to demagogue both these proposals. In Harris Wofford's now legendary Pennsylvania Senate campaign last fall, he successfully jumped on an earlier leak about administration plans to limit deductibility of health care costs. Wofford's campaign manager, James Carville, now working for Bill Clinton, was asked about the Medicare idea and said, "Medicare and Social Security are programs that benefit all Americans and it's a Republican trick to try to undermine faith in these programs."

But this is a trap. One of Democrats' few successful themes of recent years has been "fairness." How can the Democrats lay any claim to being the party of fairness if they can't bring themselves to prune government subsidies for people making more than $100,000 a year? Medicare is a huge subsidy; the premiums don't begin to cover the cost. Tax deductibility of employer-paid health care costs is a subsidy, too, and it will be pleasant to hear a Republican president admit as much (and implicitly endorse a tax increase on people making over $100,000). What will not be pleasant is to watch Republicans twist the fairness knife.

Years ago Kevin Phillips coined the devastating term "reactionary liberalism" and accused the Democratic Party of it. A reactionary liberal is someone more concerned with defending all existing government programs than with serving progressive values. It would be hard to think of a better illustration of reactionary liberalism than a refusal to consider raising the Medicare premium for rich people. (And if Democrats are going to start insisting that retirees over 65 with incomes of more than $100,000 aren't rich, they're really going to sound like Republicans.)

The impossibility of honest political discussion of the cost of entitlement programs has helped Republicans far more than Democrats over recent years. When people are convinced they can have their benefits anyway, they'll vote for the party that proposes to cut their taxes. If a Republican president is actually willing to stick his toe in the water of entitlement reform—and do it in an undeniably progressive way—the Democrats would be foolish to scare him out of it. But perhaps they are.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

FEBRUARY 10, 1992

THE CARING PRESIDENT

On the eve of President Bush's one-day campaign foray into the wilds of New Hampshire, where Pat Buchanan and a host of Democrats are rampaging, the White House quietly distributed a list of "talking points" to prominent Republican politicos to guide their spinning of the press. The first point was that, despite his long obtuseness about the slump, Mr. Bush now cares deeply. Out on the stump at last, the president tried to show his feeling side. But he did more than reveal his sentiments; he unraveled himself. It was an extravaganza of inarticulacy that all too plainly displayed his narrowly political intent.

A little more than a month before his New Hampshire trip, *U.S. News & World Report* ran an article about the marketing strategy of the president's pollster, Robert Teeter, for the upcoming campaign. Teeter has discovered that, amid growing economic stress, the public seeks a rock of stability. Mostly, people seek it within their families. "Some of the president's planners are already at work on a blueprint to package various long-standing Bush initiatives under the family rubric," *U.S. News* reported. The key words to emphasize would be "values" and "caring." Mr. Bush's New Hampshire journey was his early experiment with allaying economic discontent with "pro-family" rhetoric. "I know where New Hampshire is," he said. "I know what the values of the families are in New Hampshire, and I hope we're practicing them in the White House as a family."

"GOP polls have found that, when voters are asked to describe their greatest objective in life, fully 56 percent say a closer relationship with God," wrote *U.S. News*. Mr. Bush obliged the survey findings by constantly repeating the word "blessing." Whenever possible he mentioned his fervent desire to pray. Time and again, he raised the icon of his wife as the embodiment of his pollster's holy trinity: family-values-caring. (Her numbers are higher than his.) Consider this stream of consciousness: "There's some good things happening out there. But it's family—and, yes, faith.... These are fundamental values. And we have tried to live them. We have tried to emulate them. We have tried to advocate them. Thank God, Barbara Bush is out there hugging those kids and teaching people to read and serving... as an example to a lot of people in this country of a caring person. No political agenda—she just gives a darn." Exactly, one might surmise, the president's current strategy.

Whenever George Bush gets into political difficulty he casts himself as a figure of pathos, pleading for public sympathy. In 1988, when he lost in the Iowa caucuses, his operatives imported Peggy Noonan, a speechwriter adept as a mood synthesizer. The lagging candidate read a new mantra crafted for the new Bush: "I feel," he proclaimed. Four years later, finding himself in a similar political predicament, he has resorted to the same method. By expressing that he has feelings for others, he hopes to elicit support for himself.

The State of the Union address will serve as the focus of this caring. His proposals will likely include a capital gains tax cut (allegedly increasing revenues), tax credits for health care (a subsidy for insurance companies), and a $45 billion cut in Medicare that Congress is sure to reject. Then, in the light of these fantasy savings and enhanced revenues, Mr. Bush will unveil a "middle-class" tax cut, composed of some exemptions and credits to prove that he cares. All this will prove, however, is the president's desire to win re-election. On one side will be the "caring" president; on the other, those who don't share the proper family values. The underlying intent of Mr. Bush's proposals will be to rekindle a polarizing tax issue that he lost when he agreed to a tax increase in forging the 1990 budget agreement.

We await a realistic accounting of the state of the economy, a serious bid to reduce the unproductive federal deficit, or a speech that might articulate a set of beliefs or a coherent program for a second term. Perhaps the president, by the time of the State of the Union, will come up with something marginally less cynical than his recent blathering has implied. On recent evidence, however, we won't hold our breath. As the president said in New Hampshire, perhaps by way of inadvertent warning: "We are in a demagogic year. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

NOTEBOOK

PERONISM OF THE WEEK: "You cannot be president of the United States if you don't have faith. Remember Lincoln, going to his knees in times of trial and the Civil War and all that stuff. You can't be. And we are blessed. So don't feel sorry for—don't cry for me, Argentina." —George Bush, January 15, campaigning in New Hampshire

CONSPIRACY I: The most diverting part of the new book *Secret Life: Firsthand Accounts of UFO Abductions* by David M. Jacobs (forthcoming from Simon and Schuster) is the foreword by Pulitzer Prize-winning author and Harvard psychiatry professor John E. Mack. Mack, once known for his touchy-feely approach to assuaging nuclear anxiety (he defended the Chernobyl cover-up on the grounds that it kept Soviet children "more optimistic"), warns of "a huge, strange interspecies or interbeing breeding program that has invaded our physical reality and is affecting the lives of hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of people and perhaps in some way the consciousness of the entire planet." Although such a scenario is at variance with "prevailing notions of reality," Mack implies that our ignorance may be due in part to media distortion. Oliver Stone, call your office.

CONSPIRACY II: A January 13 *New York Times* report on the memorial service for the nine victims of the City College stampede provides startling new clues to the real reason for the calamity: "The Rev. Lawrence E. Lucas, pastor of the Resurrection Roman Catholic Church in Manhattan, suggested to the crowd that the Dec. 28 tragedy was an 'orchestrated disaster' that backfired. He said he felt the tragedy was intended to give the police an excuse to attack youths and to usurp power from the students." Another minister, the Rev. Timothy P. Mitchell, said the deaths were a "painful reminder of the racist, capitalistic, individualistic society in which we live." The Rev. Al Sharpton, under indictment and running for the Senate, was unavailable for comment.

CLOSE SHAVE: The Egyptian minister of the interior, General Abdul Halim Musa, chose an unusual setting to deliver a law and order message: the Cairo Book Fair. Speaking on January 15, he warned that the bid for power by Algeria's Islamicists was no Egyptian problem: the "vacuum" that existed in Algeria does not exist in Egypt. Nor would there be any tricky experiments with elections of the sort that got out of hand in Algeria. "We know our proper dimensions here," he added. There was "no contradiction" between the emergency decrees by which Egypt is governed and the "expansion of democracy." Musa is relatively enlightened by the standard of Egyptian ministers of the interior. These are usually tough cops who get their spurs in Asyût, in upper Egypt, hunting down Islamic fundamentalists. Last year Musa's predecessor, General Zaki Badr, provoked a storm when he instructed the headmen of the country's villages to kill "the bearded ones." Badr was sacked after he embarrassed his government by saying it was fine to kill 1 percent of the people to keep the others safe and prosperous.

THE ALMIGHTY: In China freedom of religion is guaranteed by the 1982 constitution. However, as a recent Asia Watch report details, there is a little fine print. First, you must choose from among five state-sanctioned religions: Buddhism, Daoism, Protestantism, Catholicism, and Islam. Each comes with Party-sanctioned theology, clergy, and, liturgy, which you are free to accept unquestioningly. You may encounter what a Party document refers to as "the religious real estate problem left over from history," which is short for the state's pillaging of places of worship over the past few decades. But chill. Although you may not pray in an unauthorized place of worship, you are free to set up your own, so long as you register with the municipal, county, and village patriotic associations, as well as various Religious Affairs Bureau offices, any of which may wish to investigate you for counterrevolutionary tendencies. Your organization may not accept money or literature from "foreigners whose aim is infiltration." Last, you may not evangelize, proselytize, congregate in groups larger than thirty, engage in "feudal and superstitious activities," or acknowledge the authority of the Vatican. Other than that, you're on your own.

DEPARTMENT OF RACIAL PURITY:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THERE'S A PLACE IN THIS WORLD FOR UNUSUAL PEOPLE.

ADELPHI.

Approximately 12.6 million high school seniors will be applying to college this year.

Approximately six or seven hundred of them look at this magazine every now and then.

Approximately fifty or sixty check out the ads.

And maybe four or five, at best, bother reading them.

Congratulations. You're part of that last group. This is an ad for you.

Being significantly different from the average American high school student, perhaps you'll be interested in a significantly different university:

A school that questions the value of a typical 20th century college education as much as you probably do, and a school that attempts to provide answers to your questions with questions of its own.

And a school whose ads, instead of blathering on and on, simply invite you to learn more by calling the number below.

We sincerely hope all four or five of you flood us with replies.

ADELPHI UNIVERSITY For more information call 1-800-ADELPHI.

The Bettmann Archive

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WHITE HOUSE WATCH

CRY FOR ME

By Fred Barnes

Last summer Charles Black, a Washington lobbyist and political adviser to the White House, urged President Bush to begin organizing his re-election campaign. "Why?" the president snapped. He was popular and unopposed for the Republican nomination, and the economy was accelerating. So he refused. A few months later Bush heard anecdotes from business pals that the economy was nose-diving. But Michael Boskin, his chief economic adviser, couldn't get past John Sununu, then White House chief of staff, to give the president the full, gloomy picture. So Bush did nothing. By late fall the economic tumble was palpable. The president considered proposing an anti-recession growth package and summoning Congress back into session to enact (or reject) it. No need to rush, Bush decided. Better to wait a couple of months until his State of the Union address on January 28.

This is the politics of smugness. And it's what put Bush in his current pickle. He's a victim of his own wrong assumptions about the path to re-election. He thought it would be a cakewalk like President Reagan had in 1984. That was the conventional wisdom last year (I shared it). Whoops. A second assumption was that the economy would be humming—wrong again. A third was that Bush wouldn't need a strong message in the months before the New Hampshire primary on February 18 because there wouldn't be a real campaign. Now Bush even has a highly visible *Republican* opponent, Patrick Buchanan, and he's caught without anything to say.

The smugness persists. Bushies claim it's merely confidence in the president's recuperative power, but I think it's more than that. It's Republican arrogance after beating Democrats so often for the presidency. In any case, Bush and most of his advisers have adopted a fresh set of assumptions under which Bush's re-election isn't just likely, it's inevitable. It goes like this: Buchanan is dead after New Hampshire, Bush's proposals in the State of the Union speech give him a strong domestic platform, the emerging Democratic nominee (probably Bill Clinton) soars in the spring but his momentum is slowed by press criticism in the weeks before the Democratic convention in July, and Bush rallies as the economy picks up perceptibly in late spring and early summer. What if these assumptions turn out to be wrong? Then Bush will be desperate, and probably forced to rely on highly negative campaigning that may not work as well in 1992 as it did in 1988.

I'm not sure whether Samuel Skinner, the new White House chief of staff, shares all these assumptions. But he does support the campaign strategy that grows out of them. That's the dovish Darman strategy, as opposed to the hawkish Truman strategy. Richard Darman, the budget director, persuaded Bush last fall that he shouldn't act precipitously on anti-recession proposals. Democrats in Congress wouldn't pass them, but they might send Bush a tax cut for the middle class coupled with a tax hike for the wealthy. That wouldn't help the economy, but if Bush vetoed it he'd be faulted for protecting the rich. The economic and political climate might be better at State of the Union time. Bush decided to wait.

Following this strategy, Bush will unburden himself in the speech: tax cuts, a health care tax credit, a moratorium on regulations, tax break for first-time homebuyers, etc. These items will serve as talking points for his campaign stump speech—the Bush message. Better yet, Congress will take the proposals seriously and maybe pass a few. (The nightmare scenario for Bush is if Congress passes them all and the economy still doesn't rebound. He'd lose Congress as a whipping boy.) If Bush has a program that deals with people's concerns and "makes sense for the economy," and if he "articulates it ... then he'll win resoundingly," says Skinner. "One and one equals re-election." That Skinnerism means a strong message plus a recovering economy guarantees a second Bush term.

Skinner, for all his optimism, gets credit for creating a sense of urgency at the White House. Well before he'd officially taken over on December 16, he got Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater to change his tack and admit the economy was in trouble. Skinner also prodded Bush into making a campaign trip to New Hampshire on January 15. Had Bush already proposed his anti-recession package, there'd have been plenty to talk about. As it was, Bush's speeches were practically contentless. But Bush was right to go. Otherwise he'd have been pilloried for ignoring the state. "I just wanted you to know we do care desperately," he said in Dover. At a town meeting in Exeter, he tried to coax a tough question. "Anybody got a real controversial one or want to make a statement?" he said. "I want some guy that wants to be tough, some tough guy. Who is it? The guy in the middle?" The guy turned out to be a Democrat who said he hadn't seen "very much evidence of your being the education president." Bush claimed he has a good education program, but "I don't think that we've gotten that across" to the public.

That answer was classic Bush. Bush buys the silly notion that his problems stem largely from bad communications. "I've not done a good job in getting people to understand that we've had a growth agenda," he asserted in Portsmouth. True, but there's a reason. It was a lip service agenda, one he never lifted a finger to propel through Congress. The public wasn't fooled. Anyway, a president who thinks inadequate p.r. is the big problem won't rush to adopt the Truman strategy. A handful of Bush's aides favor this approach. But they're the handful who always lose in White House political struggles. They

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wanted Bush to present bold economic proposals to a special session of Congress last fall. They lost that argument. If they had the bad boys of the 1988 Bush campaign, strategist Lee Atwater and consultant Roger Ailes, on their side, they might prevail this time. But Atwater is dead, Ailes retired from politics.

The Truman strategy goes against Bush's grain. It's one thing to take on the other party's presidential candidate, as Bush did in 1988. But Truman confronted the entire Republican-controlled Congress in 1948. When his Democratic allies in Congress pleaded for compromise, he declined. Instead, he put his program before a special session of Congress, knowing it would be rejected. Then he attacked Congress mercilessly. Can you imagine Bush doing that? Not in my lifetime. He wants to preserve the budget deal with Congress and his friendship with influential Democrats such as Dan Rostenkowski. The advisers who've got Bush's ear—Darman, Treasury Secretary Nick Brady, Skinner—feel the same way. Besides, if it's fated that he's going to win anyway, why take a chance? Wouldn't be prudent. •

A document for our time.

THE SHRUB FILE

By Douglas G. McGrath

A Report From Secret Service Agent Duke on the President's Trip to Japan

Wednesday, January 8, 1992

10:00 a.m. Arrival ceremonies at Tokyo Airport. Agents Simons, Marx, Welch, Martin, and I put the Shrub, Mrs. Shrub, and remaining American party into Chrysler, Ford, and GM sedans for ride to residences. The sedans were sent over as a show of support and pride for Detroit. Needed fourteen cars to carry everyone. The Shrub's was the first to break down when the engine fell out on the highway. Mrs. Shrub rode behind in the second car with members of the royal family. Electric windows kept going up and down all the way to residence. Wind ferocious. Mrs. Shrub looked like Don King when she got out. Mr. Iacocca drove on the wrong side of the road, since the steering wheel was on that side. Then the car lost its right wheel but Mr. Iacocca wouldn't stop. "Just everybody move over to my side!" he snapped. "Let's use some ingenuity!" And then he said, "Crummy Jap roads!"

11:01. Arrived at residence. The Shrub practiced his swing in case he needed to play pingpong with anyone. "The little yellow ones love a good game of pee-pee," he said.

11:35. Tennis instead. Japanese were amazed at the Shrub's Speed Tennis. To save time, the Shrub served all balls to the forehand side at once. The game went so fast the Japanese didn't even know they had won. Mr. Iacocca was furious when he heard about the game. He called a press conference to say that the Americans had not lost the game, they simply hadn't had sufficient access to the Japanese court.

12:00-2:30. The Shrub visited a Toys 'R' Us and spoke. He said, "Hey, if you listen to some of that critique coming out of Capitol Hill up there over across that ocean over there, you'll know that I've been kind of a shock absorber for some highly partisan spear-throwers. Carping little liberal Democrats. Name one: Dickie Gephardt. Plenty of others out there. Even taking some heat from a smart-alecky columnist isolationist in my own party. *Backward leaners.* Think that if we find a shut door over here, we should just SST it back to America and shut America's door. Well, that's their view but it's not the Bush view. And it's not the view of these gurus I've brought with me." The Shrub jerked his head over at the Big Three but they all looked pretty interested in that view. The Shrub hurried on: "But, hey! We can be big winners here out here in J-ville. Let me help you with how. Isn't about talking. It's about doing. Doing our level best. If knocking on the door doesn't help, let's maybe ring the buzzer. If no one answers the buzzer, let's maybe slip a note under the door. If that doesn't get some feedback, let's go around back and wait on the porch. But let's not leave the lot. *Not in a lot-leaving mode.* That's going to choke the throttle of the—oh, what do you call—the economy. I may be wrong, but that's what I think in here about them out there."

Something seemed a little off in this speech, even considering the Shrub's way with language, so we took him back. He wouldn't nap, but at least he slowed down. He sat on the bed and practiced dialing Yeltsin's new number.

9:45. Back from dinner. We were right. Something *was* wrong with the Shrub. He was like *The Exorcist* in a tux. He threw up at cocktails and then again *right at the table.* He made such a commotion, General Scowcroft woke up. (Personally, I thought the food in England much worse.)

Mr. Fitzwater will brief the press shortly. He is trying to think up something good-natured and funny for the Shrub to have said. Mr. Fitzwater said that humor in a crisis is pretty much pro forma ever since Mr. Deaver thought up that good, "Honey, I forgot to duck," for Reagan to have said when he was shot. So far Mr. F thinks it would have been funny for the Shrub to have said one of these three things after his collapse:

1. "I just remembered: it's *Chinese* food I love and *Japanese* food that makes me sick."

2. "Maybe if I sit down here on the floor, you all won't feel so short." or:

3. "It just makes me sick that Skull and Bones is taking women."

Me and the other Secret Service guys all think No. 2

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

is a killer, but Mr. Fitzwater isn't sure. We all agree that anything is better than what the Shrub actually said, which was: "Oh, heck, I sushied on my shirt."

10:10. Mr. Fitzwater called the Vice-Shrub to notify him that the Shrub had collapsed. Upon hanging up, Mr. Fitzwater told us how the V.S. reacted. "Good omen!" the Sapling said. "I'm wearing my presidential foot pajamas!"

Friday, January 10, 1992—Air Force One

We're on our way home, thank God. I feel so sorry for the Shrub. He is trying to stay chipper—he asked Mrs. Shrub for rubber dinner clothes for Valentine's—but I think it's all a brave act.

He rode to the airport with Mr. Iacocca. The whole way out, as he always does, Mr. Iacocca had his window down and his arm out. The Shrub asked him, "Lee, do you have to keep your arm out there on the outside of the Doris Day? It's a little tornadoey in here." Mr. Iacocca stared at him as if he were crazy. "If I don't keep my arm out, how do we know the door won't fly open?"

Poor Mr. Iacocca. He thought he was still driving a Chrysler. (They were all being repaired. This was a Honda and the nicest ride we had all trip.)

DOUGLAS G. MCGRATH is a playwright and screenwriter living in New York.

The IRS vs. Nancy Reagan.

DESIGNING WOMAN

By Jay Peterzell

As Mel Brooks said: "It's good to be the King." It's good to be the Queen, too. Often it's when you pass on the crown that the trouble starts.

President and Mrs. Reagan, for example, had barely left the Oval Office when the Internal Revenue Service began to take a hard look at the former First Lady's practice of accepting free dresses, jewelry, and furs from some of America's top designers. The IRS concluded that the ultrachic apparel clearly represented taxable income. Before they were done, revenue agents slapped the First Couple with a million-dollar bill for back taxes, interest, and possible penalties. And the debt was settled. "It was paid a year or two ago," says Jane Erkenbeck, the First Lady's former personal assistant, who is now a saleswoman in the couture section of a top Washington-area department store.

Guiding the IRS through the maze of American high-style was Chris Blazakis, a free-lance journalist and former executive for one of Mrs. Reagan's favorite designers. While assisting the inquiry, Blazakis also secretly (but legally) recorded dozens of conversations with the government agents. Since the IRS is barred by law from discussing individual cases without the taxpayer's consent, these tapes and other information Blazakis obtained provide unique insight into the Reagan investigation. Although the Reagans themselves had voluntarily disclosed their tax returns for 1981 through 1987, they did not respond when I asked them to allow the IRS to disclose the adjustments it made to those returns. Reagan spokeswoman Cathy Goldberg refused to comment or even to accept my phone calls after learning the subject of this article.

The statute of limitations for most audits is three years. But the IRS soon discovered that the Reagans had underreported their income by more than 25 percent; that triggered the so-called six-year rule, allowing the agents to extend their audit back to 1983.

It wasn't easy. A number of the designers tried to protect Mrs. Reagan. But their stories didn't hang together quite as elegantly as they might have hoped. Bill Blass told the IRS he never expected clothes he gave Mrs. Reagan to be returned. Oscar de la Renta said she gave everything back; but his firm's shipping records were too scanty to prove it. Galanos and Adolpho said most of the clothes they gave Mrs. Reagan were samples made for runway models, implying they could not have been sold anyway; but the First Lady's tiny proportions made this tale hard for the IRS to swallow. "We were very surprised how similar Galanos's and Adolpho's stories were," mused the agent in charge of the investigation after talking to the designers. "Very similar."

The National Archives barred the IRS from examining Reagan administration documents for months. Finally the tax men got in; they spent hundreds of hours combing White House photo collections to answer the question: What Did the First Lady Wear and When Did She Wear It? Armed with lists and pictures of hundreds of items of apparel, the agents then went to see Mrs. Reagan. She told them all the outfits they showed her had either already been in her wardrobe before 1983 or had been purchased after 1983 and thus were not taxable. The designers who made the clothes said the opposite: she hadn't paid for any of them.

As the April 15, 1990, deadline for the audit approached, the agents came up with a partial list of Mrs. Reagan's unreported income for each year: from a 1984 high of $295,850 to a low of $162,310 in 1985. (The yearly figures were $228,990 in 1983, $229,820 in 1986, $265,370 in 1987, and $263,850 in 1988, the last year audited.) Based on those partial figures, analysts at a national accounting firm estimate that the IRS gave the Reagans a bill for at least $960,243 in back taxes and interest ($1,172,161 if a negligence penalty was charged). The figure may have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Don't Stop Teaching the Common Heritage

BY ALBERT SHANKER, PRESIDENT OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS

Last year, around Thanksgiving, a disturbing letter appeared in the *New York Times*. A father reported that, in preparation for celebrating an "international" Thanksgiving, each child in his son's pre-kindergarten class was told to select a flag identifying his national origin. The letter writer's little boy had to decide whether he wanted a flag representing his English, Scottish, Irish, German or Jewish ancestry. The American flag was not one of the choices until some parents complained—too late for this man's kid to choose it.

But the man wasn't writing about his son's disappointment. What bothered him was the lesson all of this was teaching the kids about their identity: "On one of this country's truly national holidays, they are encouraged to think of themselves as anything but American....What is being challenged here is the whole idea that there is an America—that people of different races, creeds and national origins can be united as one nation."

Is the belief in a common heritage disappearing in the U.S.? Do people in various ethnic groups think public schools should forget about fostering pride in American values and achievements and, instead, teach kids only about the values and achievements of their own groups? That's the message this father got, and it's the one you'd get if you listened to the comments of leaders from various ethnic groups—and to some well-intentioned educators, like Thomas Sobol, New York State's commissioner of education. These people think they're being responsive to the wishes of their constituents. Now, the results of a public opinion poll commissioned by the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) tell us that scrapping the common heritage in favor of separate histories of separate groups isn't what ordinary citizens want at all.

A New York State poll shows that most African-Americans, Hispanics and whites agree on this point.

Three-quarters of the New York staters who responded to the NYSUT poll considered teaching "the common heritage and values that we share as Americans" to be "very important." And when you break down responses by ethnic groups, it turns out that many more African-Americans and Hispanics believe it's "very important" to teach the common heritage than whites: The numbers are 70 percent of whites and a whopping 89 percent of African-Americans and 88 percent of Hispanics.

But respondents to the NYSUT poll were not talking about going back to the old way of teaching history, when we ignored the contributions of minority ethnic and racial groups to American history and society. Eighty-nine percent believed that public schools should teach "*both* the traditional events of American history and the contributions and experiences of America's ethnic and racial populations." And there was strong agreement across groups on this point: 88 percent of the whites, 91 percent of the African-Americans and 92 percent of the Hispanics polled believed that both should be taught.

What about the self-esteem factor? Would students who are achieving poorly do better if they were taught about their ethnic heritage? Most respondents to the NYSUT poll did not believe this was the primary cause for poor student achievement. Only 6 percent overall (and 12 percent of African-Americans) put failure to teach students about their ethnic heritage at the top of the list. The most-cited reason was crime and drugs in the neighborhood (41 percent), followed by neighborhood poverty (24 percent). Even inadequate school funding came above "not knowing enough about their heritage" as the chief cause for poor achievement. Furthermore, the majority of people did not believe that schools had the primary responsibility for building ethnic and racial pride in kids: 92 percent overall—including 88 percent of African-Americans and 85 percent of Hispanics—said that was the job of the family.

Should we be surprised that African-Americans and Hispanics believe, even more than whites, that children should learn about America's common heritage in public school? Or that a big majority still believes it is the family's responsibility to instill ethnic and racial pride in children? These responses may be surprising in the light of things we hear from some community leaders, but they are consistent with our past practices and beliefs.

Members of minority groups in this country have always believed, correctly, that their children's path to success lay in learning the common culture and that the public schools were responsible for teaching that culture. It was the job of families and churches to make sure kids understood and valued their ethnic and racial heritage.

This is not merely an American pattern. A study of immigrant children in French elementary schools, for instance, shows that 80 percent rejected the special classes offered in their own languages, largely because they did not wish to be stigmatized or placed at a disadvantage by having an education different from other French children. And they were right. Foreign-born children who got a French education from the beginning achieved at slightly higher levels than French children from the same socioeconomic groups.

We hear a lot of separatist rhetoric these days. The NYSUT study offers heartening evidence that those who supposedly speak for a community are not always the voice of the people. We should pay attention. It would be tragic to intensify divisions in our society with separatist curriculums when most people still want children to learn about our common heritage.

For more information about the poll, contact NYSUT, 159 Wolf Rd., Box 15-008, Albany, NY 12212-5008.

MR. SHANKER'S COMMENTS APPEAR IN THIS AD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS. READER CORRESPONDENCE IS INVITED. ADDRESS YOUR LETTERS TO MR. SHANKER AT THE AFT, 555 NEW JERSEY AVE., N.W., WASHINGTON, DC 20001. ©1991 BY ALBERT SHANKER.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

been whittled down somewhat if the Reagans filed an administrative appeal and negotiated payment terms with the IRS. They did not take the matter to tax court, which would have made it public. "Something the Reagans are apparently very interested in," an IRS official observed at one point, "is not having the existence of this examination common public knowledge." Their friends in the fashion world are nearly as discreet. "That's history and I don't want to go into it," says Galanos of the day he spent being grilled by IRS agents. "I understand she has paid."

Tax agents told Blazakis in early 1990 that the Reagan case had been referred to the Criminal Division—which refused to take it. And yet even a civil case against the First Couple would send an important message and "come to the attention of lots of folks," an IRS official assured him. Tax delinquents in the White House may have been just the right symbol for the 1980s. But now it's time to pay the piper.

JAY PETERZELL is a Washington correspondent for *Time*.

TOKYO POSTCARD

REPENTANCE

By Joanna Pitman

Seventy-nine-year-old Hakudo Nagatomi, a hospitable and mild-mannered doctor, reclined stiffly in the living room of his old wooden house, drew a deep breath, and closed his rheumy eyes to begin his tale. "On my first day in China, back in 1937, I proved my courage by beheading twenty Chinese civilians. It is very hard to say this, but the truth of the matter is that I felt proud of Japan." Nagatomi was reflecting, with remarkable candor, on his role in the rape of Nanking. Fifty-four years ago last month, Japanese soldiers slaughtered 200,000 to 300,000 civilians and prisoners of war, raped 20,000 Chinese women, and rampaged through the town of Nanking, torturing and looting at random, a horrific episode in the Japanese expansion in East Asia.

Nagatomi had invited me to his Tokyo home to relate, for the first time to a foreigner, the truth of his wartime past, a story that until this year he had kept secret from the people he works with, the people he shares a home with, the people he loves. Mitsuno, his merry, ruddy-cheeked, 68-year-old wife, had welcomed me with tea and cakes, but as soon as her husband launched into his confession, she excused herself, disappearing into the kitchen "to prepare a Chinese meal—because you will be talking about China."

For four harrowing hours the details came tumbling out as Nagatomi unburdened himself of his memories of premeditated mass barbarism on a scale that has few historic precedents: "I remember being driven in a truck along a path that had been cleared through piles of thousands and thousands of slaughtered bodies. Wild dogs were gnawing at the dead flesh as we stopped and pulled a group of Chinese prisoners out of the back. Then the Japanese officer proposed a test of my courage. He unsheathed his sword, spat on it, and with a sudden mighty swing he brought it down on the neck of a Chinese boy cowering beside us. The head was cut clean off and tumbled away on the ground as the body slumped forward, blood spurting in two great gushing fountains from the neck. The officer suggested I take the head home as a souvenir. I remember smiling proudly as I took his sword and began killing people."

Japanese students of history are given scant information about their country's military exploits in Asia in the 1930s. Though the curriculum of history textbooks was originally set by American occupation forces, it is now subject to regulation by the obdurate ministry of education. While not misrepresenting actual facts, the texts gloss over the rape of Nanking, referring only to Japan's advance through Asia, a benevolent campaign of friendship, designed to liberate the continent from the evil grip of Western imperialism.

This year Nagatomi and two other former army officers have spoken out publicly about their war crimes for the first time on a video made by a group of anti-war lobbyists, excerpts of which have been broadcast on a national television channel. The video is intended to prompt Japan to confront its own history. Ever since the war, younger generations have grown up in the belief that Japan was simply a victim of Allied aggression that culminated in the atom bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, bringing the brave Japanese to their knees.

"The government still refuses to recognize the extent of Japanese wartime aggression in Asia, the crimes carried out by people like me. Most Japanese have no idea what happened. They have been wrongly protected from the truth," said Nagatomi, gesturing at an array of photographs of himself, the mild old man, cozily surrounded by his grandchildren. "My three daughters have never asked me about the war and I have still never directly told them, although I know that they have now seen the video."

But there has been little demand for the video, and efforts to mount public displays of photos of the rape of Nanking have met with little success. "Few know that soldiers impaled babies on bayonets and tossed them still alive into pots of boiling water. They gang-raped women from the ages of 12 to 80 and then killed them when they could no longer satisfy sexual requirements. I beheaded people, starved them to death, burned them, and buried them alive, over 200 in all. It is terrible that I could turn into an animal and do these things. There are really no words to explain what I was doing. I was truly a devil." The devil that Nagatomi had

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

become was driven, he said, not by nihilism or some uncontrollable fury, but by a wildly perverted subservience to his own god, the emperor of Japan. Millions of Japanese soldiers committed atrocities in the name of the emperor, unable to recognize the horror of their actions until years later.

For twelve years after the Japanese surrender in 1945, Nagatomi fought on in China, first with Chiang Kai-shek's army against the Communists, then with Japanese resistance fighters secretly planning to relaunch the offensive for a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. In 1957 he was captured and tried in a Chinese court and sentenced to thirteen years in jail in Fushun, near the Korean border. His video contains crackling footage of the trial. A Chinese woman shrieks hysterically, pointing her trembling finger at Nagatomi. "This man burned to death my 10-year-old daughter and my 7- and 5-year-old sons ..." The wailing trails off as the woman slumps trembling to the floor. Nagatomi can be seen listening in horror, his head bowed and tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Twenty witnesses came forward, all relations of men, women, and children I had murdered—you realize I killed all those people. They shouted and screamed at me, called me a devil. Although I speak only a little Chinese, I knew exactly what they were saying," he said, his voice slowing and diminishing almost to a whisper, as he steeled himself, beneath those shuttered eyelids, to continue his story. For Nagatomi, the first day of his trial released a terrible recognition of the truth. Every detail of the trial remains engraved on his memory. "I remember thinking the sentence was far too light. I wanted to die; but then I knew that dying was not enough."

How did the rather puny and bookish-looking boy, pictured surrounded by his sisters in the family photo album, come to turn into a devil? Nagatomi was born in 1916 to a rural middle-class family in Kumamoto Prefecture, 900 kilometers from Tokyo. "As a boy I was a weakling, always prone to illness. I was the type who burst into tears watching a sad film." Nagatomi's father, a landlord, much impressed by the rising tide of militarism in Japan, had high expectations of his only son. "I had to prove myself to him, so I did everything I could to strengthen myself physically." Curling sepia photos show Nagatomi as a wiry and determined junior high school marathon champion, clearly proud to be perfecting himself in his father's eyes.

"From the day I joined middle school [aged 14] everything I was taught was referred in some way to the greatness of our emperor." At this time Nagatomi's family lived in Korea, which was under Japanese colonial rule. "I was taught of Japanese racial superiority, and the need for Japan to control Asia according to the teachings of the emperor. I was taught to despise other Asians. When I returned to school in Japan I knew that the emperor was the natural ruler of the world. It was imbued in us day after day. I came across no one who doubted it."

No one, that is, until Nagatomi was challenged by the local Christian priest. "Who is greater, God or the emperor of Japan?" he was asked. "I had no doubt that the correct answer was the emperor." When the priest refuted this, the hot-headed and disgusted Nagatomi shoved the priest out of his way and that day left Kumamoto for Tokyo, where he enrolled at Kokushuin University, a well-known breeding ground for nationalists. Nagatomi joined right-wing extremist associations that ended up under the tutelage of Mitsuru Toyama, the fanatic leader of the Black Dragon Society, a notorious ultrarightist group associated with the pre-war assassinations of several moderate political figures.

It was as a promising rightist student that Nagatomi was sent to China in December 1937. Today Nagatomi sells copies of his video to the patients who visit him at his local office. Through the excruciating process of atonement he is seeking a chance to repent his sins and to cleanse his soul, as good Buddhists should before they die.

JOANNA PITMAN is the Tokyo correspondent for *The Times* of London.

A miracle deficit cure.

NO MONEY DOWN

By James K. Glassman

The U.S. government can save $100 billion a year by doing what hundreds of thousands of homeowners are doing right now—refinancing debt at lower interest rates. Just as Americans are trading in 11.5 percent mortgages for ones at 8.5 percent, the Treasury can trade long-term bonds that pay 7.7 percent for shorter-term ones that pay 3.9 percent. OK, it's not quite as easy as that, but the savings, even if the Treasury managed to reduce its debt bill by only a small amount, would be enormous.

Interest on the national debt is the fastest-growing line item in the federal budget. In 1970 the government paid out $14 billion in interest; in 1991 it paid out $195 billion—or 15 percent of the entire budget, including transfer payments like Social Security. The government spends more on interest than it does on education, health, transportation, natural resources, energy, agriculture, science, space, and technology—combined. The Congressional Budget Office projects that in 1993 interest will exceed all federal domestic discretionary spending.

It's because of the combustive characteristics of com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pound numbers that interest on the debt keeps rising faster than everything else. The problem is that we're paying interest on the interest because we have to borrow to pay it. Between 1970 and 1990 interest payments rose by a factor of twelve, while the federal budget as a whole rose by a factor of six.

The math is horrifying. Interest expenses will keep rising geometrically even if we manage to balance the rest of the budget. Here's why: assume you have an interest-only loan on your house at 8 percent, with a $1,000 mortgage payment each month. And assume that, since you don't have the money to pay the interest, you borrow it each year. (This is exactly what the government does, but with bigger numbers.) The first year, you pay $12,000 in mortgage interest and $960 in interest on the loan to pay the mortgage interest. In nine years your total interest payment will double to $24,000 annually, and in thirty-six years it will grow to $192,000. Now substitute real federal interest figures at that 8 percent rate: annual interest on the current U.S. debt will grow to $3 trillion by the year 2025—even if the rest of the budget is in balance every year between now and then! But if we can somehow reduce the rate of interest to 4 percent, then our total interest bill will become only about $700 billion instead of $3 trillion, so we'll be saving $2.3 trillion in the year 2025. In just that one year alone. The average annual savings will be in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

The Treasury has about $2.4 trillion in debt outstanding to the public in the form of bills, notes, and bonds. Bills have maturities ranging from ninety days to one year; notes from one year to ten years; and bonds from ten to twenty years. The Treasury's policy is to finance the government's debt with a mix of maturities, lately with less and less emphasis on the short-term. According to the most recent statistics, about $600 billion of the debt was in the form of bills, about $1.4 trillion in notes, and about $400 billion in bonds.

The mix is important because there's a big difference in the rates of interest the government pays on each. The rate is determined by the financial taste of the people who buy the debt—that is, investors who lend the government money. Most of the time, investors will demand higher rates of interest on debt that has longer maturities; this is only natural, since investors inherently distrust the government and worry that it will try to inflate away the value of the money they've lent it. Since the U.S. economy is so sluggish now, the yield curve—the line you'd draw on a graph with one axis being the number of years to maturity and the other axis being the rate of interest—has become quite steep. Investors are pretty certain that, with the economy stagnant, the chances of inflation in the near-term are low, so they're willing to accept low interest rates on their loans to the government. But they're still worried about what will happen a few years out, so rates get steadily higher for longer maturities.

Last week, for example, a Treasury bill maturing six months from now was paying only 3.9 percent interest; a note maturing in two years was yielding 5 percent; a note maturing in five years was yielding 6.5 percent; and a bond maturing in 2020 was yielding nearly 8 percent.

Right now only about one-quarter of the government's debt is in short-term bills, but what if the Treasury decided to do all of its new borrowing short-term, trading 8 percent debt for 4 percent? The government isn't allowed to call all of its bonds in for refinancing—the way that corporations often can (and the way that you yourself can on your mortgage). But let's say, for the sake of illustration, that it could, over the next few years, convert all of its notes and bonds into bills. The average note, as of September 30, 1991, was costing the Treasury 8.4 percent in interest; the average bond, 9.7 percent. If the going rate for bills stays at around 4 percent, then the Treasury could trade the $150 billion in interest payments it's now making on those bonds and notes for about $70 billion in interest on bills—a savings of $80 billion a year. Of course, it couldn't all be done in a year, but even over four years the savings would be huge—especially when you consider that, over that time, the annual deficit will increase the amount of debt by another $1 trillion or so. Indeed, if the Treasury simply financed its next $400 billion in debt with 4 percent bills instead of 6.5 percent notes, it would save $10 billion the first year and a total of $61 billion over five years.

This idea is so simple that there must be something wrong with it. And there is: some economists believe it would be inflationary to do so much short-term financing. It is argued that investors would begin to treat T-bills almost as cash, as though the government were financing itself with a printing press. This concern is psychological rather than real, however, and confident fiscal and monetary policy can counteract it. A more important worry is that by shifting to shorter maturities, the government would be doing what someone who buys a house using a one-year adjustable-rate mortgage rather than a fixed-rate thirty-year mortgage is doing—betting that rates will stay the same or go down. But rates could go up. That 4 percent T-bill will come due in a year and the Treasury will have to refinance it with another one-year T-bill at a time when market rates could be 6 percent.

True, there's a gamble here, but it's a bet worth making, for two reasons: first, unlike the homebuyer, the government can actually influence interest rates itself, through Fed policy and fiscal policy; and, more important, to the government the short-term savings on interest have a double-whammy effect. Lower interest payments are helpful to the economy (and keep down future rates) since they cut the federal deficit. And still lower interest payments today mean lower payments tomorrow, because of the effect of compounding.

Wall Street securities traders don't like the idea of depleting the supply of long-term debt because bonds fluctuate in price far more than bills, and traders can

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rake in higher commissions in a more speculative environment. But some economists, like James Tobin of Yale and Paul Samuelson of MIT (both Nobel Prize winners), support the idea. In hearings before the Joint Economic Committee on January 9, Samuelson advocated what he called "a cooperative effort by the Fed and the Treasury—involving a tilt toward shorter-maturity new offerings." He said we should take advantage of "the current market window of opportunity" that has been created by the sharply rising yield curve. He's right. Trading 8 percent debt for 4 percent could, in a single year, save as much money as chopping the entire Agriculture Department out of the budget. Come to think of it, let's chop the Agriculture Department too. •

Don't cut the tax, Mr. President.

A CAPITAL GAINS PRIMER

By Michael Kinsley

My first signed article in this magazine, in 1977, was a plea to Congress not to cut the capital gains tax. But did they listen? No. The capital gains battle has continued for fifteen years. Both sides have won skirmishes. Our side's great moment was the 1986 tax reform, which eliminated the special break for capital gains, among other loopholes, in exchange for lower tax rates on all income. By coincidence the top tax rate on capital gains now stands at 28 percent—the same rate to which it was cut back in 1977. But President Bush has been trying for his entire presidency to enact a new capital gains tax cut. He says it is central to hopes for economic growth. And even many Democrats, on Capitol Hill and the presidential campaign trail, favor some kind of capital gains break—usually limited or "targeted" in some way.

This bad idea just won't go away. One reason is that debates over tax arcana tend to be dominated by those who understand them, who tend to be those who benefit from them. A new capital gains break will overwhelmingly benefit the well-to-do. According to the congressional Joint Tax Committee, Bush's proposal amounts to an average $12,500 tax cut for people making over $200,000 a year. That is not a fatal defect. If it spurred economic growth, the unfairness would be worth it and could be mitigated in other ways. But all honest logic says that a capital gains tax break is bad economics. Here's why.

The basic concept is called *tax neutrality*. Economies function best when taxes are designed to affect economic decisions as little as possible. Alternative forms of labor and alternative outlets for capital should be taxed the same. If you tax butchers more than bakers, you'll get fewer butchers and more bakers. If you tax one form of investment more than another, money will flow out of the first and into the second. If you tax capital a lot less than you tax labor, you are artificially encouraging the replacement of people by machine.

Of course this argument assumes that the free market allocation of labor and capital is the correct one. You are free to challenge that assumption. But if you do, you must explain why the government should be able to do the job better. And you are earning a label—"central planner" or even "socialist"—that most advocates of a capital gains break certainly don't want. A capital gains break is an "industrial policy." It replaces the invisible hand of the market with the heavy hand of government.

There is nothing metaphysically unique or morally superior about capital gains—profits on the sale of a capital asset (stock, real estate, gold coins, etc.)—compared with other forms of investment income. Giving special tax treatment to capital gains is doubly wasteful. First, it misdirects capital to places that capital otherwise wouldn't go. The currently empty office buildings thrown up in the 1980s are a testament to this phenomenon. Second, vast sums of money and reservoirs of human ingenuity are consumed in the effort to turn ordinary income into capital gains—the essence of tax shelters.

That is why of all proposals for a capital gains break, the stupidest are those that would pay for it by raising the top tax rate on other income. The bigger the gap between artificially favored and disfavored activities, the more the inefficiency and waste. But all capital gains break proposals are foolish enough.

So that's the case against, in a nutshell. But the argument gets far more intricate. Here are some of the feathers and furbelows.

But what about inflation? It's true that the tax treatment of capital does not account for inflation. If you sell a share of stock you've held for many years, you pay tax on your entire nominal profit, even though the dollars you get back are worth less than the dollars you invested originally. But the same is true of all forms of investment

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

profit. Interest, for example. If you're getting 8 percent interest at a time of 3 percent inflation, you're really only earning 5 percent but you pay taxes on all 8.

Capital gains already enjoy a tax advantage over interest: you only pay tax when the investment is liquidated, instead of every year. Meanwhile, the profit compounds tax-free. It makes a big difference. Compare two investments, both yielding 10 percent a year for twenty years: one in the form of interest, one in the form of capital gain. The after-tax profit on the capital gain will be 45 percent larger. This goes a long way toward cushioning the blow of inflation.

Furthermore, the tax treatment of borrowing costs is not indexed for inflation either. If you're paying 8 percent interest on a business loan, you get to deduct the whole 8 percent even if 3 percent of that represents erosion of the lender's principle through inflation. To account for inflation only in the tax treatment of capital gains, while ignoring these other matters, would create a nightmare of loopy incentives. People would choose 6 percent returns over 8 percent returns. People would even borrow at 8 percent to invest at 6 percent. The economy would be distorted, the Treasury would bleed, accountants would grow rich.

Perhaps the whole tax code should be indexed for inflation. But no one is suggesting that, because it would be viciously complex. The better solution is the one Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan has almost engineered: eliminate inflation. Then the tax problem goes away.

But what about these Democratic proposals for a "targeted" capital gains break? Aren't they OK? In two words, 'fraid not. These schemes generally would limit a capital gains break to investments in new companies or long-term investments or investments in certain industries. The idea is to focus the tax benefit on particularly desirable forms of investment rather than scattering it to the winds. Give the break to the gal who founds a new company, not to the one whose shares of General Electric happen to go up. What's wrong with that?

One problem is definitional. What is a "new" business? Lawyers and accountants will manipulate any definition to defeat its intended limits. But, in tax policy as elsewhere, definitional problems indicate conceptual problems. Why should something important (like a lot of money) turn on a concept you have trouble defining?

There is nothing inherently creative or entrepreneurial about new businesses per se. Why favor a new McDonald's franchise over a promising initiative by an established company? Nor is there any reason to reward people who buy "new" issues of stock as opposed to those who buy stock that's been previously issued. The point is that whenever you use taxes to encourage investment in one thing, you're discouraging investment in something else.

And even if you believe there is something inherently meritorious about "long-term" business thinking that the market is somehow unable to appreciate, a tax break for long-term stock investments is a simple logical error. There is no connection between how long I hold a share of stock and the time horizon of the corporate manager. Even if I hold the stock for only two weeks, I will sell it to someone else who will sell it to someone else. How much I will pay depends on how much I think they will pay. The prospective value of the company ten years from now will have the same effect on the stock price today no matter how often the shares change hands in the interim. Artificially encouraging stockholders to trade less frequently will give managers no added incentive to think long-term.

But a capital gains tax cut won't cost anything. It will actually bring in more revenue. That's what the Bush administration claims. It proposes to use the "revenue" from a capital gains cut to pay for other cuts. The February 3 issue of *Forbes* has a chart showing that capital gains tax revenues have always gone up when the tax rate went down, and vice versa. There are a couple of sleights of hand going on here.

Of *course* a special tax break for capital gains increases capital gains tax revenues. If you enacted a special tax break for people named Forbes, people would change their name to Forbes and revenues from people named Forbes would go up. Revenues from people with other names would go down. So would total revenues. Ditto if you give a special break to something called "capital gains." Revenue from "capital gains" goes up, other revenue goes down (more), as people adjust their affairs to take advantage of the break.

There is one way a capital gains cut really would bring in additional revenues: the lower rate would "unlock" investments people are holding onto because they don't want to pay the tax. To some extent this would increase government revenues by genuinely increasing the efficiency of the economy. Capital would move more quickly in response to market incentives. (Just the opposite, please note, of the "long-term" investing capital gains cut enthusiasts also claim to want.) But most of the additional revenue following a capital gains cut would simply reflect the fact that investors were cashing in sooner rather than later. For the Treasury, any extra revenue in the first couple of years would mean less revenue later on.

If the goal is to "unlock" capital gains, a better way to do that would be to eliminate yet another tax advantage this form of investment has over others: the so-called "angel of death" loophole. When you die, the capital gains tax on investments you still hold die with you. Heirs, when they sell inherited property, pay tax only on the gain since they inherited. Ending this anomaly would bring the Treasury some $5 billion a year. It also would make flow of capital more efficient by relieving people of the incentive to hold onto investments into the grave.

But a capital gains tax cut will raise stock prices and real estate values. That would be nice. And it's probably true. The stock market does tend to rise and fall with the outlook for a new capital gains break. But that says nothing one way or the other about the merits of the tax break itself. If the government were to announce its intention

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

IS RELIGION JUST FOR THE IGNORANT?

In many intellectual circles the myth still circulates that religion is the preserve of the dim-witted and unlettered. Yet, recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, and amid inquisitive people generally, there's an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This fascination is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious renaissance entail embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or superpatriotism. Nor does it imply a retreat from working for peace, justice, or human dignity. Rather, there's an awareness that, as Jean Bethke Elshtain put it, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political choices which are far more durable than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and technology.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this return to religion, and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual engagement with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments that yield humane social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as St. Francis, Gandhi, Bonhoeffer, Barth, Tawney, Schumacher, Mounier, Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Simone Weil, Martin Luther King Jr., and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary and philosophical riches offered by such greats as Kierkegaard, Tolstoy, Buber, Auden, Eliot, Silone, Maritain, Waugh, Merton, C.S. Lewis, Walker Percy, Flannery O'Connor, and Graham Greene.

An ecumenical monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by George Will as "splendid," by the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty as "lively," by Berkeley's John T. Noonan Jr. as "indispensable," and by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky."

Those who write for us — Robert N. Bellah, J.M. Cameron, John Lukacs, Henri J.M. Nouwen, Robert Coles, Christopher Lasch, Eileen Egan, and others — express themselves with clarity, verve, style, and heart. We bat around a wide variety of issues and defy easy pigeonholing. If you're keen on intellectual ferment and the life of the mind and spirit, subscribe today!

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription. . . . . .$14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription . . . . . .$12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription . . . . .$23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year Canadian or foreign subscription . . . . US$17 (regularly $22) Payment must be drawn in US Dollars
- ☐ Sample copy. $3.50

Send coupon or letter. Make check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Mail to:

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 746
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94706

NAME (Please print or type)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to give $10 a share to the owners of all listed stocks, stock prices would go up $10. Does that make it a good idea? Any rise in market values due to a capital gains tax cut could well be—would be, in my view—just a reflection of the discounted present value of the future tax savings. Fiscally, it would be no different from the government simply borrowing the money and handing it out to stockholders—hardly a sensible formula for genuine growth.

But Alan Greenspan says that theoretically capital gains shouldn't be taxed at all. That does give one pause. The theoretical argument goes something like this. The fruits of a citizen's labor are already taxed once when she first earns them. If she chooses to spend the money, the government makes no more claim on it. But if she chooses to save and invest it, she is taxed again. This is both unfair and inefficient, discouraging saving and encouraging consumption.

Well, ideally, all taxes should be zero because all taxes discourage the activity being taxed. (The exception is a land tax, as Henry George famously noted, because land has nowhere to go.) Taxes on labor discourage work and encourage sloth; taxes on capital discourage thrift and encourage consumption. Work and thrift are both admirable habits that ought to be encouraged, but the government must also be paid for. For any given level of revenue, reducing the penalty on thrift means increasing the penalty on work. It is hard to see how placing 100 percent of the burden on labor and 0 percent on thrift is fairer or more efficient than sharing it between the two.

But didn't JFK cut the capital gains tax because he believed in economic growth? This myth is part of the larger myth that the Democratic Party, once-upon-a-time sensible and patriotic, became terminally obscurantist and un-American around 1972. In fact, Kennedy did propose a small cut in the top capital gains tax rate. But he combined it with an end to the "angel of death" loophole and a longer "holding period" to qualify for the break. The net effect would have been an *increase* in the capital gains tax burden. When Congress wanted the larger tax break without the sterner stuff, the administration balked and treatment of capital gains remained unchanged. So the oft-heard notion that the boom of the 1960s had anything to do with "Kennedy's capital gains tax cut" is beyond myth and into the realm of fantasy.

But don't they have much lower capital gains taxes in Japan? Not at all. It's true that sellers of listed stocks have the option of paying a flat 1 percent of gross proceeds (not net profits) in lieu of a capital gains tax. But the tax on most other capital gains ranges up to 65 percent on investments held less than five years and 33 percent on investments held longer than that. The tax on real estate is even more onerous. If held less than ten years, the tax ranges from a minimum of 40 percent to a maximum of over 72 percent.

Japan's basic income tax rates also range up to 65 percent (at around $140,000). Its inheritance tax is stiffer than ours. And there is no "angel of death" capital gains loophole. There's no indexing. But then, there's not much inflation either. In fact, the Japanese somehow don't do too badly economy-wise, despite tax burdens that apparently would destroy the incentives of any self-respecting American entrepreneur.

Who cares about long-term economic efficiency? What we need now is a short-term jolt. Even if you're willing to exacerbate our deficit dilemma for an immediate economic stimulus—a mistake—a capital gains giveaway would be a foolish way to go about this. There would be no impact for months. It would kick in just as a recovery was starting, when, by this logic, it ought to be repealed. Other forms of economic adrenaline—including direct government investment in infrastructure projects like roads and bridges—would give more and faster bang for the buck.

But what about capital losses? Here we get into real aficionado territory. The 1986 tax reform limited the annual tax deduction for capital losses to $3,000 per person. What does this mean? It means you can subtract your capital losses from your capital gains each year. If your losses are more than your gains, you can subtract up to $3,000 a year against other kinds of income. You can "carry forward" losses beyond $3,000 and use them to reduce your income tax in future years. But you can't use unlimited amounts of capital losses to cancel out taxes owed on non-capital income. Critics of the capital gains tax—most notably *The Wall Street Journal* editorial page—can turn apoplectic about this seemingly obscure provision. Why? Solving the mystery offers insight into the true politics of capital gains.

Ask yourself: Who is affected by the capital loss limit? Only those who, year after year, lose more than $3,000 on their investments. There are two such groups. First, genuine perennial losers. Such people are surely to be pitied, but our economic prosperity hardly depends on them. And perennial losers are hardly likely to have the political clout to make an issue of this capital loss business. So consider another group: people who arrange their affairs to have enormous paper losses year after year. What makes capital gains different from other forms of income is that you can choose when to liquidate an investment and take the tax consequences. A basic technique of tax planning is to move up losses and push back gains. More sophisticated techniques involve complex transactions that generate vast "losses" right away and compensating "gains" that can be put off. Without the loss limitation, it would be possible to get richer and richer while never paying any tax at all. Mystery solved.

For the wealthy and the middle class alike, the 1986 tax reform deal was: give up your loopholes and you'll get lower rates. The philosophy was: end all the complicated incentives for this and that, lower the basic rates, and let the market work unmolested. Proposals to restore the capital gains break amount to ratting on the deal, but more interesting is the way they betray the philosophy. Do these people believe in capitalism or not? •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE YELTSIN REVOLUTION

By Martin Malia

Over the last five years, it has become clear that the process of communism's disintegration is as revolutionary as the process that established it in power. And this second revolution, a revolution against the heritage of the first revolution, has just as clearly not yet run its course. So far this new revolution has known three phases. The first was Gorbachev's perestroika, which one of his idea men, Fedor Burlatsky, now characterizes as "a revolution of the dilettantes," an impossible wager to reform the system without abandoning its socialist foundations. The second was the actual demise of communism, when the wager ended in the total collapse of the system: the fall of Eastern Europe in 1989, which demonstrated that the "conquests of socialism" were reversible, and hence the system everywhere was mortal; then the coup de grace in the heart of the system, Russia, last year. At present Boris Yeltsin and the Russian democrats are launching a third phase, that of building a post-Communist order, or as they would put it, of "returning Russia to Europe" by creating a "normal society." The great question now is whether this, too, will turn out to be an impossible wager.

Clearly no one in the West takes Yeltsin for a miracle worker, as some once did Gorbachev, and there is no Western cult of his personality. Quite the contrary, his government is regarded with suspicion, if not hostility. At best he is accorded grudging support in the interests of post-Soviet stability. The lack of a positive Western response to the Yeltsin wager could weigh against its chances of success. This is a government, after all, that aims at integration into the world community.

But the principal factor governing the prospects for Yeltsin's reform is the legacy of Soviet failure, including perestroika. The scope of the Soviet collapse is unprecedented in modern, indeed world, history. This point bears emphasis because mainline American Sovietologists have long misconstrued the Soviet system, making it appear much more of a success than it really was. They argued that the USSR was no longer totalitarian but had developed into an "institutional pluralism," and was thus capable of a "transition" to some sort of social democracy. Their processing of flawed Soviet data through Western models for calculating the GNP produced an economic success story that augured well for an evolution to democracy and that also informed the CIA's absurd belief that the Soviet economy was some 60 percent of the American.

Thus we were presented with a maturing Soviet society quite prepared to make the wager of perestroika a success. And so such authorities as Professors Jerry Hough and Stephen Cohen, for five years, regularly assured us. But the exit from communism, when it came, was not a transition or an evolution. It was a brusque collapse, a total implosion, of a sort unheard of in history: a great state abolished itself utterly—in a matter of weeks—and right from under its president. The reason this happened is that the Soviet Union, *pace* most Western Sovietology, was in fact a total society, with all aspects of life linked in what one scholar called a "mono-organization" whole. At its core was the Party to which all aspects of life were subordinated: the economy, government, culture, private life itself. This total society logically ended in a total collapse of all its interrelated parts at once. Thus we now have in the midst of the resulting rubble a total problem embracing every aspect of life.

What is Yeltsin's program for coping with this universal crisis? Indeed, does Russia's first democratic government have a coherent program at all? And how do its policies relate to Russian nationalism, the matter that seems to worry the West most about post-Sovietism? The bedrock of the Russian democratic program since 1989 is to undo everything that communism has done since 1917, including Gorbachev. As such, the program is truly revolutionary, its notion of "democracy" a post-Communist and revolutionary notion. Yeltsin and the democrats have too often been presented in the West simply as populist rivals of Gorbachev, out for power. But all Yeltsin's statements, from his June presidential campaign through his recent New Year's address, show that he seeks to effect the "rebirth of Russia" by "liberating" her from the "destructive disaster of communism." This aim should be taken quite seriously, and literally.

Thus, Russian democracy means, first, refusal of the Communist monopoly of political power, which translates as the principle of a multiparty order. Democracy means, second, refusal of the Communist monopoly of

MARTIN MALIA is professor of Russian history at the University of California, Berkeley. His book *The Soviet Tragedy* is forthcoming from Free Press.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

economic power, which translates as the principle of private property. And the rule of law derives logically from the first two principles. Finally, at the end of the process of challenging the Communist order came the challenge to still another Party monopoly of power—that of state authority—which translates as the dissolution of the pseudo-federation, or Union.

The history of this program's development bears repeating, since it was generated by a series of shocks, of collisions with Party authority. The first came at the Congress of People's Deputies in May-June 1989. Even though Gorbachev had an overwhelming, and in the words of Yuri Afanasiev, "aggressively submissive" majority, a liberal minority of the Congress spoke out, on national TV, against the appalling ills of the system. The result was a "demystification" of communism from which it never recovered. At the same time these liberals, largely from the *Moscow Tribune* group, became convinced that Gorbachev in no way contemplated power-sharing and must be openly opposed. They formed the Interregional Group of Deputies, under Andrei Sakharov and Yeltsin, which brought together all the future stars of Russian democracy, from Gavriil Popov and Sergei Stankevich to Anatoli Sobchak. Russian "civil society," as all groups independent of the state now came to be known, thereby received a political expression; and its program was the end of the Party's "leading role" in all spheres of life.

At first the heretical right to private property was mentioned only sotto voce by the democrats. But with the collapse of Eastern European communism in the fall of 1989 this issue, together with its corollary—the market, now came to the fore. By spring 1990 the example of Poland's "big bang" transition to the market led the Soviet government to draft plans for transition to a "regulated market," another self-defeating half-measure. But they were soon forced to go further when a new front against the Party-state was opened up in June 1990 by the movement for the sovereignty of the Union republics. Launched by Russia, following the Baltic example, this movement by the end of the summer had spread throughout the Union. The very existence of the "center" was now called into question.

Because of this weakening of the center, it became possible for the democrats to force the issue of private property. The result was the "500-Day Plan" associated with Stanislav Shatalin and Grigori Yavlinsky. This plan was not exactly "shock therapy," because the shift to the market was spread over a year and a half, but it had revolutionary implications. A political as much as an economic document, it emanated from a group of younger economists under Yavlinsky who wanted simply to finish with the system. They planned to do this by establishing republic, or local, control in moving to the market, an approach that would automatically undermine the Party-state's "center." Yeltsin quickly espoused this plan, and then prevailed on Gorbachev to accept it also. But in September Gorbachev suddenly drew back, as he and the rest of the establishment realized the political threat this economic program entailed.

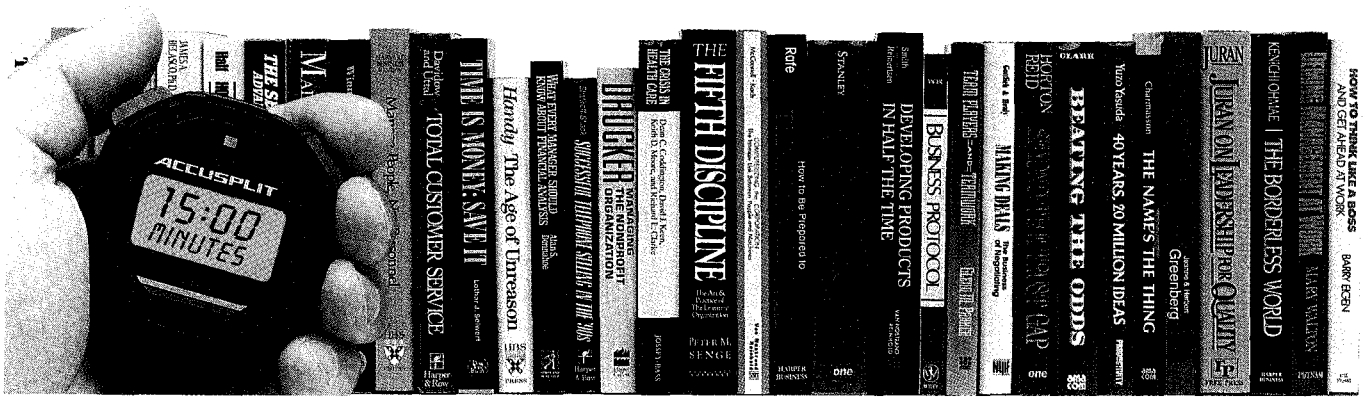
From the fall of 1990 to the spring of 1991 Gorbachev moved to the "right," back to the Party, police, army, and military-industrial hierarchies. The Yeltsin democrats, sensing they could soon be eliminated, fought back with demonstrations and strikes. As a result, Gorbachev in April flipped again to the left, giving way to Yeltsin and the republics on most points in a new, more flexible Union treaty. But this capitulation appeared to the old guard as the death sentence of the Party-state. Just before the new treaty's signing on August 19, this group declared their president to be incapacitated and took over, as a prelude to quashing the democrats by force.

Two things about this famous "coup" require emphasis, because both are prudishly ignored in the Western press. First, this "coup" was in fact no coup at all, because the "coup plotters," as they are quaintly called, were none other than the Soviet government: the vice president, the prime minister, the ministers of defense and interior, the head of the KGB, the chairman of the Supreme Soviet, and the chief of staff of Gorbachev's personal Cabinet. They were quite simply the whole Communist establishment; their aim was to depose a chief whose indecision they believed, correctly, was leading the system to catastrophe. If Gorbachev did not know that these close collaborators, all of whom he had appointed, were working toward a state of emergency, then he was incompetent, which is as bad as complicit.

The second notable thing about the August coup is that Yeltsin and the democrats were ready not only to resist it, but also to escalate this resistance into a counter-coup against the Party-state. Once the junta's military thrust had been thwarted, Yeltsin suspended the Communist Party, took over the KGB and army command, appointed an economic committee under Yavlinsky, and began measures to decommunize and professionalize public functions. All of this was done by a cascade of decrees previously prepared in the Russian Council of Ministers. Thus, although all constitutional forms were preserved by restoring Gorbachev to power, and indeed using him to validate the new decrees, in fact a counter-coup had been carried out disestablishing the Communist system. This behavior was criticized abroad at the time as "autocratic." But there could be no democracy in Russia without first dismantling the Leninist system. It would have been absurd to try to pass Yeltsin's measures through the "due process" of a Communist legislature. The only feasible course was to seize the opportunity provided by the post-coup vacuum and to act swiftly, while the momentum of victory was still strong.

So began the third and most radical stage of what had become an open revolution against Leninism. And this third stage will be the most difficult in the exit from communism. For getting rid, at last, of the system also means provoking the final collapse of all its components: the economy, the administrative system, the state structure itself. Nor were the democrats ready for these problems. Their clear adversary, the Party, had evaporated. Thrust into power far sooner than

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



Now You Can Read the Best Business Books of 1992 — in Just 15 Minutes Each

Too much to read! It's impossible to find time to read today's top business books—and thousands are published each year.

Yet not keeping up with those books could be a serious, and expensive, mistake. Often the ideas and insights they contain are available nowhere else.

But how can you even know which titles are worthwhile—let alone find time to read them?

Fortunately, there's a solution . . . *Soundview Executive Book Summaries.* It really works. In fact, it's guaranteed to work.

Ingenious. Essential. Every month, you receive two or three quick-reading, time-saving summaries of the best new business books.

Each *Executive Book Summary* contains all the key points in the original book. The big difference: instead of 200 to 500 pages, the summary is **only 8 pages.** Instead of taking five, ten or more hours to read, it takes **just 15 minutes!**

Which Business Books Should You Read?

Of the thousands of business books published annually, only a handful are really worth reading.

To save your time, our Editorial Board plows through them all, eliminating 99%. Our standards are high, the criteria rigorous.

When a book meets all our tests, we prepare a *Summary.* Not a review (somebody's opinion). Not a digest (book excerpts strung together). You get a skillful distillation that preserves the content and spirit of the entire book.

How Many of These Outstanding Business Books Have You Read?

The titles you'll find summarized cover every subject of concern to business people today. Management techniques, advertising and marketing, productivity, leadership and motivation, career advice, effective communication, hiring and firing, health and fitness, negotiation, time management, small business tactics, computers, strategic planning, personal finance, and much more.

Some of the superb business titles summarized for subscribers have included:

The Art of the Long View
Deming Management at Work
Managing the Non-Profit Organization
The Crisis in Health Care
The Fifth Discipline
Computerizing the Corporation
Healing the Planet
Think on Your Feet
Selling to the Affluent
and many more!

With *Executive Book Summaries,* you will:

1. *Get ideas you can use immediately.* Not buried in a pile of reading you'll never get to.
2. *Bolster your business confidence.* A "talking knowledge" of the latest books lets you respond intelligently.
3. *Learn more, remember more.* (According to a scientific study, the ideas in a summary are more easily remembered than the same ideas in a book.)
4. *Slash hundreds of hours off your reading time.* Get the "meat" of a book in minutes instead of hours!
5. *Save money.* To buy the 30 books that will be summarized next year, it would cost you about $795. And would you have time to read half of them?

There's nothing else like *Soundview Executive Book Summaries.* The *Wall Street Journal* hails it as

> "An inventive answer to what is becoming an increasingly irksome management problem: too much to read."

Our Guarantee

Executives coast to coast, in every field, are discovering this unique time- and money-saving solution.

Subscribe today. If, at any time during your subscription, you are not completely satisfied, you may cancel and receive a full refund of the unexpired portion of your subscription.

2 Free Bonuses

With this offer you will receive a free bonus copy of *Skills for Success: The Experts Show the Way*—the book with hundreds of terrific ideas from past summaries. This handy reference tool is yours to keep even if you cancel.

If you act now, we'll also extend your subscription by 2 months—free. That's 14 months for the price of 12.

Call Toll Free 1-800-521-1227
24 Hours a Day in U.S. & Canada
In Other Countries Call 1-802-453-4062
Or complete coupon and mail today.

Subscribe NOW! For Faster Service
Fax your credit card orders directly to us using this form.
FAX to 802-453-5062.

☐ **YES,** send me **Executive Book Summaries** for 14 months at only $79.50 (28% off the regular rate of $110). Also send me my free copy of *Skills For Success: The Experts Show The Way* as an added bonus. I may cancel at any time and receive a full refund of the unexpired portion of my subscription. Everything I have received is mine to keep regardless.
Please send U.S. funds only. Canadians add 7% GST. Outside U.S. & Canada send $139.

Name _____

Company _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ Check enclosed. Charge my:
☐ VISA ☐ American Express
☐ Diners Club ☐ MasterCard

Credit Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____

Mail to: Soundview Executive Book Summaries
5 Main Street SNP012
Bristol, Vermont 05443-1398
USA

©Copyright Executive Book Summaries, 1992

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How many of these common practices are killing your productivity?

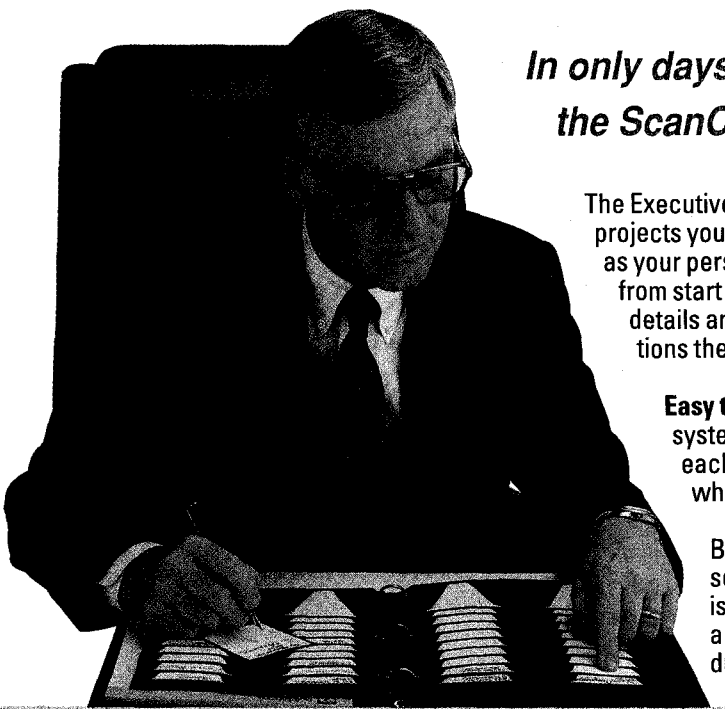
(and that of your whole organization)

Operating from scattered follow-up notes on your desk and calendars.

Pockets full of reminder notes about important projects.

Relying on memory to know what is due next... from whom... when.

Making project lists that must constantly be rewritten.



In only days, you can end these frustrations with the ScanCard® "Management Control Center."

The Executive ScanCard® System can double, even triple, the number of projects you can keep moving smoothly at the same time. The system serves as your personal "Control Center," monitoring all your important activities from start to finish. With its help, you eliminate missed deadlines, forgotten details and costly last minute rushes, as well as the stress and frustrations they always cause.

Easy to use. Unlike complicated organizers and time management systems, the ScanCard® System is easy and fast to use. Simply record each project on a separate card, and then merge it into the system, where it remains until the project is completed.

Because of the system's patented design, the cards can be scanned daily, in only seconds, to jog your memory on what is due next on each project... from whom... and when. As a result, everything runs smoothly, and your productivity increases dramatically, as do all the rewards from increased effectiveness.

Executive ScanCard® Systems
The choice of Fortune 500 executives

ScanCard Systems® are now being used to improve productivity by executives in over 450 of the Fortune 500 Companies, including General Motors, IBM, Ford, ITT, Mobil and AT&T.

The President

For management people on the move.

- Holds 64 projects (more panels can be added)
- Includes pen holder and 8 1/2" × 11" tablet
- Your initials imprinted on cover (upon request)
- Includes Pocket Idea™ wallet and 500 ScanCards®
- Available in black, brown or burgundy

#P32 Leather-like vinyl	***$49.95***
#P45 Genuine leather	***$99.95***
#P95 Elegant calfskin (Vip Series)	***$179.95***

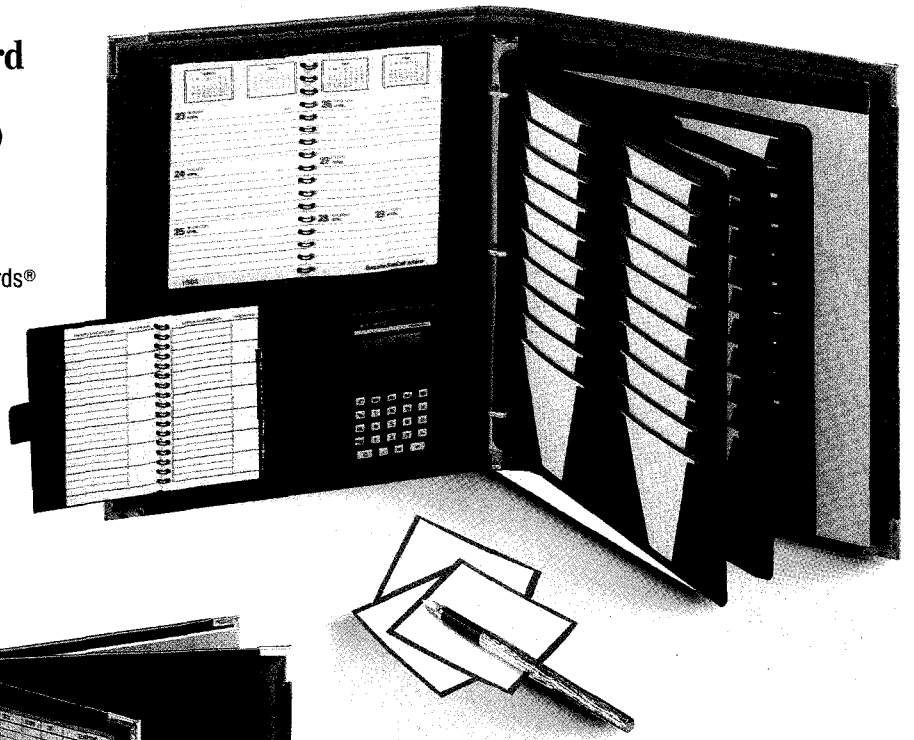
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

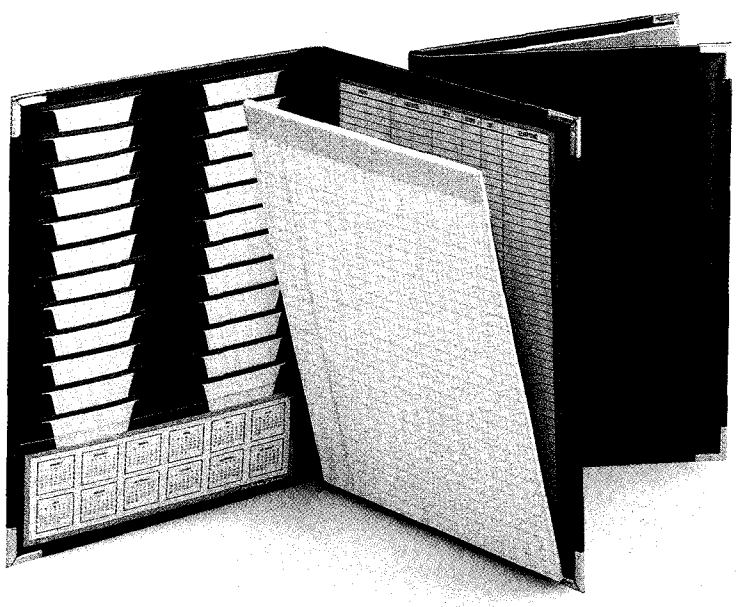
The Chairman of the Board

It's like a traveling office.

- Holds 120 projects (more panels can be added)
- Handy appointment calendar and phone index
- Built-in multi-function calculator
- Several file pockets, pen holder, and tablet
- Your initials imprinted on cover (upon request)
- Includes Pocket Idea™ wallet and 500 ScanCards®
- Available in black, brown or burgundy

#CB31 Leather-like vinyl	***$99.95***
#CB50 Genuine leather	***$159.95***
#CB95 Elegant calfskin (Vip Series)	***$259.95***





The ScanCard® Organizer

Increased productivity in "thinline" form.

- Accommodates 24 projects
- Includes pen holder 8 1/2" × 11" tablet, Pocket Idea™ wallet and 500 ScanCards®
- Phone index and year-at-a-glance calendar
- Handy Trap File™ for important papers
- Your initials imprinted on cover (upon request)
- Available in black, brown or burgundy

#043 Leather-like vinyl	***$39.95***
#044 Genuine leather	***$89.95***
#095 Elegant calfskin (Vip Series)	***$139.95***

ScanCard® Accessories

ScanCard® Panels. Increase capacity of Chairman or President models by 40 projects per panel. #AO2 $9.95 ($2 S&H)

ScanCard® Project Cards.
Box of 500 cards. #AO1 $9.95 ($2 S&H)

Lined ScanCard® Project Cards.
Box of 500 cards. #A53 $9.95 ($2 S&H)

ScanCard® Telephone Message.
Box of 500 cards. #AO3 $9.95 ($2 S&H)
Pad of 500 cards. #AO3P $9.95 ($2 S&H)

ScanCard® Memos.
Box of 300. #A21 $12.95 ($3.50 S&H)

Monthly Planner for President Model
Month at a glance calendar plus file space.
Black or Brown #A10 $11.95 ($2 S&H)

For shipments outside the Continental U.S. add the following charges to the standard S&H:
Alaska & Hawaii $12.00 Mexico $14.00
Canada & Puerto Rico $12.00 All others $20.00
Payments in U.S. dollars. U.S. Pat. #4,571,867. International patents pending. Copyright 1991. Executive ScanCard®Systems.

▼ **These savings available on all models!** ▼

Equip your entire organization and **SAVE!**

5% OFF when you order 4-9 units

10% OFF when you order 10-19 units

15% OFF when you order 20-49 units

20% OFF when you order 50 or more units

Order Now Toll Free!

Or fill in and mail this order form to:

Executive ScanCard®Systems
814 W. Third Ave., Dept. 816 A
Columbus, Ohio 43212

1-800-848-2618

(In USA & Canada!)

For fastest service Fax your company P.O. or credit card order: **614-469-3112**

In a hurry? **Federal Express® delivery available. Call for rates.**

Yes, please send me the following Executive ScanCard®System(s). I understand that it will double my productivity in 30 days or I may return my system(s) for a full refund. I would like to order as follows:

Item #	Qty.	Price (ea)	Color	Initials	Total

Subtotal

Payment in U.S. dollars.

***Shipping, handling, & insurance**

* If your order totals	Please add
Under $25.00	$ 4.00
$25.01-$ 50.00	$ 5.00
$50.01-$100.00	$ 7.00
$100.01-$250.00	$10.00
$250.01-$500.00	$15.00
$500.00+	5% of sale

Intnl. orders, see left.

OH residents add sales tax.

TOTAL

☐Check/M.O. enclosed ☐VISA ☐MasterCard
☐Diners Club ☐American Express ☐Discover

Card # Exp. Date

Signature

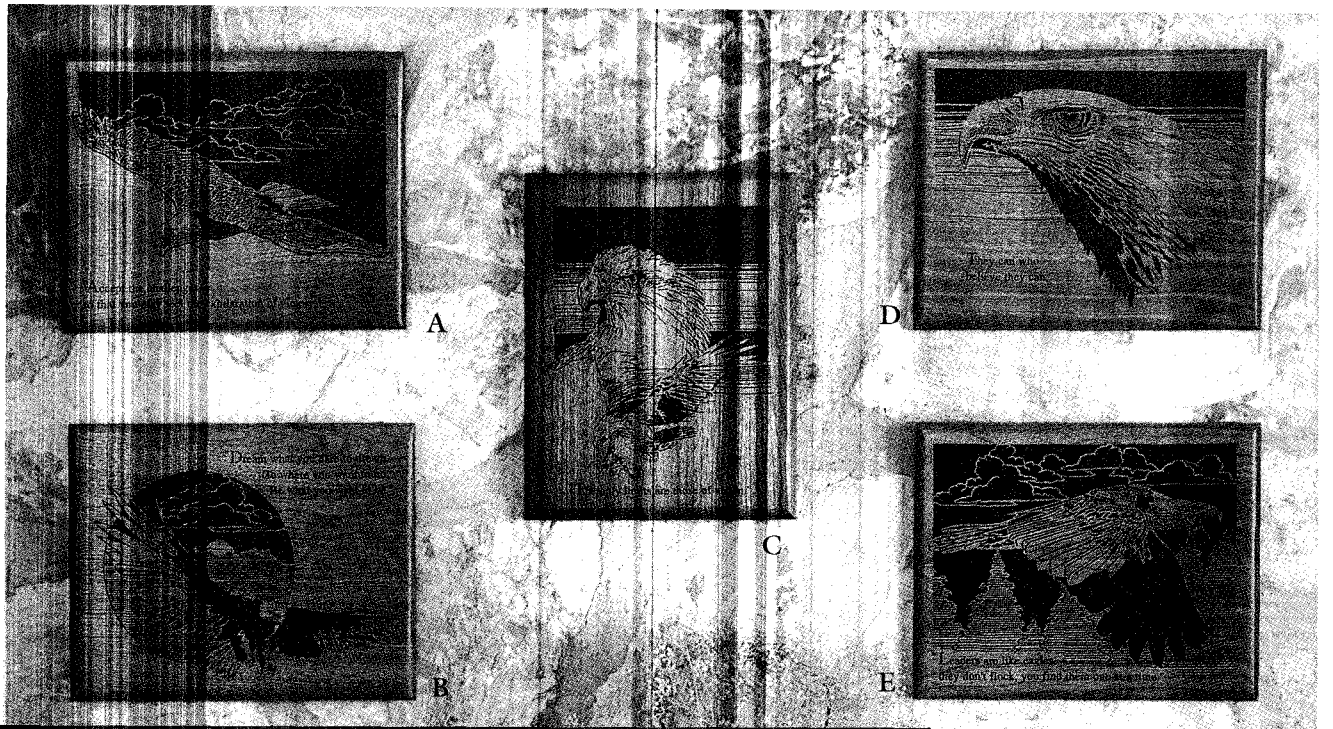
Name

Address

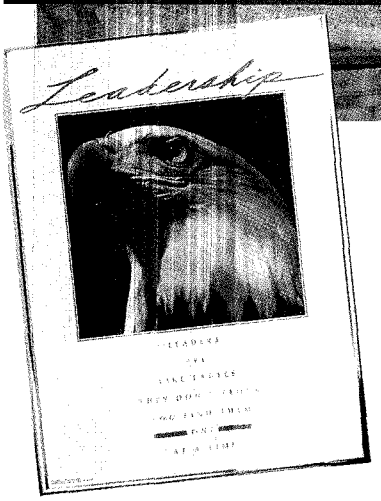
City/State/Zip

Business Phone # ( )

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



DISPLAY A SYMBOL OF LEADERSHIP



Leadership *"Leaders are like eagles they don't flock...you find them one at a time."* It has been proven that top achievers surround themselves with symbols of success. This handsome 18" x 24" Eagle lithograph is hand-numbered from a limited edition print run and displayed in a high quality electroplated gold finish frame.

Lithograph
Item #732066 $59.95

Great inspiration from our National Symbol ... the American Eagle. A spirit of leadership!

By using a revolutionary new art form called laser engraving, we've created these beautiful new Eagle plaques. A beam of invisible light from a powerful laser was used to carve elegant designs of the American Eagle, plus motivating quotes, into solid black walnut presentations. Grown in the beautiful midwestern United States, this environmentally friendly black walnut is cut and then replanted for responsible usage. These exquisite 8" x 10" plaques serve as a constant reminder of your sincere beliefs and environmental appreciations. The perfect accent for your home or office.

Solid walnut Eagle laser plaques $29.95 each

A. *"Accept the challenges so that you may feel the exhilaration of victory."* **Item #5004**
B. *"Dream what you dare to dream. Go where you want to go. Be what you want to be."* **Item #5003**
C. *"The limits are only those of vision."* **Item #5002**
D. *"They believe they can."* **Item #5000**
E. *"Leaders are like eagles they don't flock . . . you find them one at a time."* **Item #5001**

Photographic salute to the American Eagle

This hardbound tribute to the American Eagle is an exciting look at the history, symbolism, tradition and legend that have long been associated with strength, leadership, power and courage. A blend of wonderful, poetry, photography, and essay. With over one hundred pages, this makes a prized gift for any executive, eagle enthusiast or environmentalist.

Book
Item # 713007 $39.95

Order Now Toll Free 24 Hours!

1-800-848-2618

Visit our New Showroom in Columbus, Ohio

Plant a tree when you use your MasterCard® card. Details will arrive in your package.

FORESTS FOR OUR FUTURE

Master the Moment and *Plant a Forest.*

For shipments outside the continental U.S. add the following to the standard Shipping & Handling:
Alaska & Hawaii $12.00; Mexico $14.00; Canada & Puerto Rico $12.00; All others $20.00.

Copyright 1991 The Executive Gallery," Inc.

Fill in and mail this order form to:

The Executive Gallery,™ Inc.
814 W. Third Ave., Dept. 816 B
Columbus, Ohio 43212

Yes! Please rush me the following eagle item(s).
I understand that I may preview them for 30 days and if not 100% satisfied return them for a courteous refund. I would

Payment in U.S.$

Item #	Qty.	Description	Subtotal

*If your order totals:	Please add:
Under $25.00	$ 4.00
$25.01-$ 50.00	$ 5.00
$50.01-$100.00	$ 7.00
$100.01-$250.00	$10.00
$250.01-$500.00	$15.00
$500.00+	5% of sale

*Shipping, handling, and insurance.
OH residents add sales tax.
Grand Total

To order additional items please attach separate sheet.

Order Now Toll Free24 Hours!
Company purchase orders now accepted via facsimile!
1-614-469-3112

1-800-848-2618
(In USA & Canada)
In a hurry? Federal Express® Delivery available. Call for rates.
FEDERAL EXPRESS

☐ Check/M.O. enclosed ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
☐ Diners Club ☐ American Express ☐ Discover

Card # Exp. Date
Signature
Name
Address
City/State/Zip
Business Phone # ( )

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

they had anticipated, the new government floundered in its first six weeks, eroding the trust of a public bewildered by Yeltsin's lack of follow-through and panicked as full realization of the economic disaster at last hit them. The president disappeared to the Crimea for two weeks, whether to recuperate after a grueling year or to let his contentious followers sort themselves out back in Moscow, it is still not clear. For there was—and still is—a real problem of the coherence of the Yeltsin coalition.

Who constitutes this coalition? Among Yeltsin's supporters there is first the Democratic Russia Movement, whose president is Afanasiev, an alliance of various parties and lobbies going back to March 1990, which put Yeltsin, Sobchak, Popov, and other democrats into office. But this is a broad movement, like Solidarity, not a cohesive political party; and once *the* Party was no longer in the field, "Dem Russia" began to splinter, just as Solidarity did. Second, there is the Interregional Group of Deputies, which has given Yeltsin crucial members of his Advisory Council, such as Stankevich and the radical democrat Galina Staravoitova. Quite different is the Urals group of old Yeltsin aides, prominent among whom is his de facto prime minister, Gennadi Burbulis, a 45-year-old ex-professor of "scientific communism." These men are provincials, often from the old apparat and with links to the military-industrial complex so dominant in the Urals, though they are now fiercely anti-Communist.

Then there are the liberal deputies of the Russian Parliament, associated with that body's chairman, Ruslan Khasbulatov, who is, however, still a defender of socialism. Yeltsin acquired this dubious ally for his first election as president in 1990, and Khasbulatov, as well as most of the Parliament, is now opposing Yeltsin's liberalization by refusing to name a new, non-Communist director of the State Bank. Beyond this circle, there is General Alexander Rutskoi, Afghan War hero, leader of "Communists for Democracy," and vice president. This ally Yeltsin acquired in March 1991 in order to split the Communist majority in Parliament, so as to survive impeachment by Gorbachev's Communists, and he took him in June as vice president. Rutskoi is also outspoken against liberalization, so there is a growing chance of constitutional conflict between Yeltsin and Parliament. Then there is Yeltsin's still solid clientele in the army, which voted heavily for him in June, led by Marshal Shaposhnikov; and with these, most of the intelligentsia of Moscow and St. Petersburg, who abandoned Gorbachev for Yeltsin. Such a heterogeneous group obviously could not live in harmony for long after August: choices both of policy and of personnel would have to be made. It was only in late October that these choices began to emerge, and it was not until late November that a new government was formed to implement them.

After August two great issues faced the new government: how to effect the unavoidable shift to the market and private property, and what to do about the "Union." And these two were closely linked: economic reform within the Union as a whole could only be based on compromise and hence would be by steps; economic reform in Russia alone would mean a sharp plunge, and hence meant destroying the Union framework. On both issues the radical option was finally chosen—but only after four months of struggle within the democratic coalition, and between Russia and the other republics.

In August a special committee under the Russian prime minister, Ivan Silayev, and Yavlinsky was put in charge of the economy and made into a Union body. This approach led by October 1 to the signing of an economic Union at a meeting of most of the republics in Alma-Ata. A month after Alma-Ata, however, further talks failed to give life to the new economic Union because of a deep divergence of Russia's interests from the other republics'. The conflict was due above all to the fact that Russia—unlike all the others except the Baltic states and Caucasian republics—had made an anti-Communist revolution. In Ukraine, Belarus, Kazakhstan, and Central Asia, the Party of Leonid Kravchuk, Ivan Shushkevich, and Nursultan Nazarbayev is still in power. All had behaved ambiguously during the coup. Most were neither ready nor eager for rapid marketization.

In late October the Yeltsin government therefore opted for a radical "Russia first" program, which the republics could follow as they might. In an address on October 28, Yeltsin announced that most prices would be freed by year's end, without wage indexation; privatization would also begin. He also called for accompanying emergency political measures. First, he had elections suspended for a year. Public opinion surveys made by the government had shown that if elections were held, the democrats would be in trouble. The Russians had also noted that recent elections to the Polish Sejm had returned a fragmented, unmanageable legislature. Yeltsin thus received power to rule by decree, subject to some parliamentary supervision. Finally, he assumed direct responsibility by taking the post of premier himself. He declared that if his new government did not begin to produce results within a year, he would step down.

When things had shaken down by November, it turned out that the August government of Prime Minister Silayev, and yesteryear's economic innovator, Yavlinsky, who advocated an all-Union, phased approach, had lost out to a more junior group of economists, mostly under 35, led by Yegor Gaidar, who favored a "Russia first" program of shock therapy. It is Burbulis, the allegedly benighted professor of scientific communism, who persuaded Yeltsin (obviously no expert in economics) to adopt this radical program, and to form the new ministry around the "Young Turks," or the "Boys in Reeboks," as they are known.

Accordingly, at the end of November Burbulis became first deputy prime minister, Gaidar deputy prime minister for the economy and finances, and Alexander Shokhin deputy prime minister for labor and employment. In the words of Mikhail Berger, the highly regarded economic expert of *Izvestia*, these men and their colleagues are the first group of real economists ever to be put in charge of the Russian economy. Basi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cally pragmatic, they have also worked with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to make sure their program meets international standards, and with such Western economists as Jeffrey Sachs of Harvard and Anders Aslund, the Swedish economist and Soviet expert, who have been given offices near the Kremlin and have worked actively in preparing Gaidar's reform.

This reform proposes the most far-reaching change since Stalin built socialism. In December the country was opened to almost unrestricted foreign investment, with a right to repatriate profits. On January 2 came the liberation of prices except for basic food staples, energy, and transportation, where prices are to be increased three- or fourfold. Still to come are control of the budget deficit and inflation, stabilization of the currency, and internal convertibility of the ruble. Privatization of 70 percent of retail commerce and services has been targeted for the end of 1992. At the same time, measures of "social defense" have been adopted by Labor Minister Shokhin to tide the country over what can only be a painful transition for the majority of the population, some 50 percent of which lives below the official poverty line.

In addition, major decisions have at long last been made about agriculture, the greatest scandal of the Soviet economy. At the end of the year Yeltsin decreed that land would be given to peasants as private property, with resale subject only to minimal restrictions. This measure was to take effect immediately to permit results before spring sowing. Moreover, Russia's state and collective farms are to be dissolved. Gorbachev never contemplated anything more than long-term leasing of land to peasants, a precarious tenure they were never willing to accept. Yeltsin's decision is truly revolutionary, the surest sign that the new government is in earnest. Though many criticisms can be made of this program, Russia at last *has* a program, and Yeltsin must act while he still enjoys public confidence. The program is risky, but it is less risky than doing nothing.

This choice of a radical economic program was also a major factor in condemning the Union. Gaidar and his "boys" had always wished to get rid of the dead weight of the republics and their conservatism. When in December the latter tried to postpone the date of price liberalization from December 15 to late January, Russia unilaterally fixed the date at January 2. Most of the republics followed. If the former empire is to modernize its economy rapidly, clearly Russia will have to be the locomotive of the transformation.

Other forces worked to condemn the Union. Nationalism is one of these, but it acts in a special way under Soviet conditions. Most of the fifteen former republics are not real nations. With the exception of Georgia, Armenia, and the Baltic states, none has existed as a historic nation within its present borders or ever had an independent state. These republics were administrative subdivisions, created by the "center" to neutralize national feeling and, in Asia, Islamic internationalism, by giving them a purely formal statehood. Russia is a case apart, because it is a real historic nation with a genuine state. But it was never simply a *russkii*, national state. It was a *rossiiskii*, imperial state, that included other nations as protected, if not equal, subjects of the czar. The USSR was not a Russian national state either, though it used the Russian language and culture to cement the empire. The Soviet empire was a Party-empire, in which Communist, not national, loyalty was what counted.

Moreover, neither under the old regime nor under the new had the present Russian Federation existed as a separate entity; like all the other republics, it was a Soviet administrative creation. And, strange as it may seem to foreigners, the Russians have long considered themselves to be especially oppressed by Sovietism. Their standard of living was lower than that of the other republics. Their republic had been accorded none of the external trappings of nationhood, such as a separate Communist Party or Academy of Sciences. Rather, their culture was expropriated by the "center" for socialist purposes, and Russian values denigrated as reactionary. Hence, Russian nationalism could be even more virulently anti-Soviet than that of the non-Russian republics.

When the Union's crash came last year, it was propelled by two forces: ethnic nationalism and a strong movement for local control against the Party-center. This drive for local power explains why even Russian areas of the Federation, from St. Petersburg to the Far East, and even districts within the city of Moscow, sought autonomy. And it explains the iconoclastic passion with which all Bolshevik symbols, from the name of Leningrad to the Red Flag itself, have been repudiated. Finally, it tells why the apparently reasonable device of the federal Union framework, so convenient to foreign powers and so potentially handy for negotiating the transition to democracy, could not in the end be preserved.

What emerged was Yeltsin's Commonwealth, no analogue to the European Community, and no body capable of coordinating the ex-Soviet "economic space." But neither is it simply a device for creating a new Russian hegemony in the East: Yeltsin's sponsorship of Baltic independence and his willingness to let the Asian republics go show he is no traditional "Great Russian chauvinist." What the Commonwealth comes down to is the best available compromise to keep Russia and the republics cooperating, to negotiate their real and many conflicts of interest.

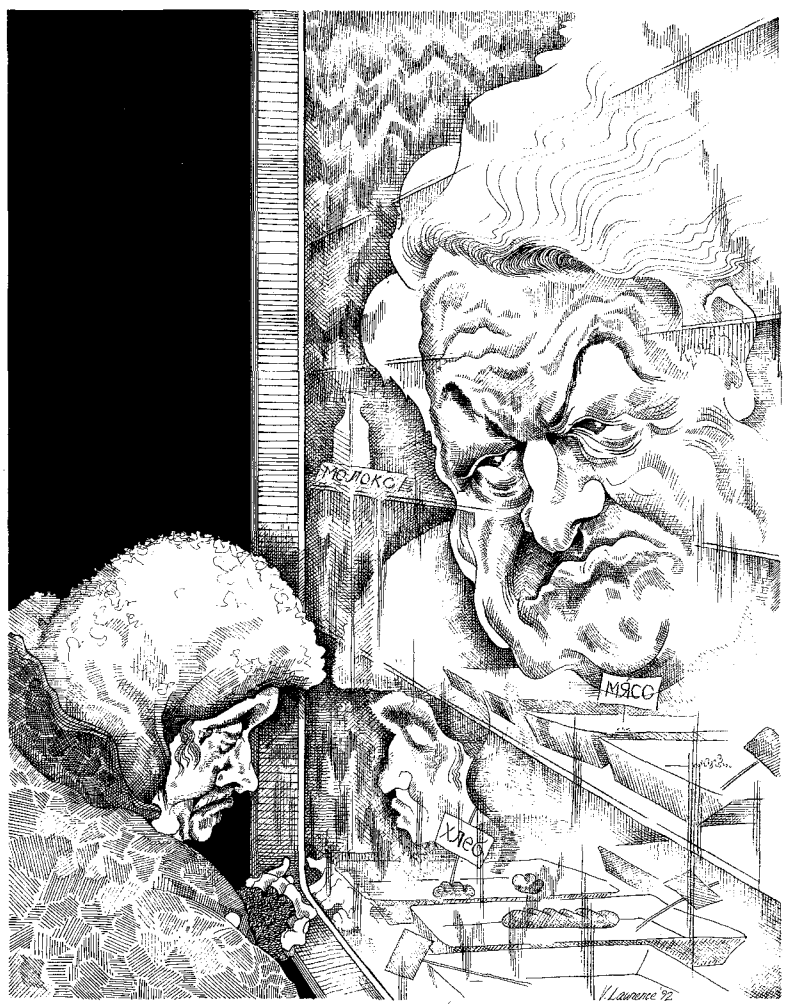
For Russia, the first of these interests is the 25 million nationals beyond its frontiers, especially in Ukraine and Kazakhstan. The members of this diaspora are Yeltsin's constituents; they are, after the Armenians, the ethnic group most threatened by violence; and the Russians at home expect their government to protect those now abroad. And Ukraine, though wary of Russia's intentions, has in fact taken account of these concerns by extending citizenship to all who live on Ukrainian territory, recognizing the official use of Russian where its speakers are the majority, and reassuring the Jewish population that their rights will be respected. So far, that permanent diplomatic conference that is the Common-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

wealth—and the caution of its leaders—has kept the former Soviet Union from going the way of Yugoslavia.

Moreover, the Russian nationalism that we have so far seen is a positive one. The horrors of World War II have given national sentiment such a bad name that it is now often considered the antichamber of fascism—except in the Third World. This is a shallow judgment: a sense of communal cohesion, of common values, all founded on a minimally "usable past"—in short, of patriotism—is necessary for the healthy functioning of any nation. And humanity does come in national units.

The nationalism of Yeltsin and the Russian democrats is in the lineage of the national democrats of the European revolutions of 1848. Moreover, it is not so much directed against other ex-Soviet peoples as against the spurious internationalism of communism. In its most dignified and cultural form it is represented by the medieval historian Dmitri Likhachev, advocating the return to traditional spiritual values. In its more practical and predominant form, as represented by Yeltsin and his Young Turks, it is a "Westernizing" nationalism, in the tradition of Peter the Great or the reformist prime minister of 1906-11, Piotr Stolypin. Its aim is to modernize Russia along European, and especially American, lines so as to realize her national potential.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

So what can we in the West reasonably expect as the outcome of this revolution? It would be wholly misplaced to assess the Yeltsinian wager through the prism of our own Jeffersonian democracy. Attaining such standards is not in the cards; insisting on them would simply play into the hands of the many losers, East and West, of the August revolution, who have a vested interest in its failure, so as to salvage belief in the allegedly unrealized potential of the Soviet experiment. For what the Yeltsin democrats are building now in Russia is capitalism, and building capitalism is not a goal that inspires lyrical engagement, or one that people of generosity readily take to. Yet it is only if Russia succeeds in building a market economy that the higher refinements of democracy will eventually be added onto it. Thus Yeltsin's economic effort is far more important than the attempt to contract a Commonwealth. Yeltsin and his partisans also know that they have only the narrowest margin of error, and that if they fail, some rougher modernizer, on the model of General Pinochet, will take over and resort to much more brutal methods.

What we will have for at least one more year, therefore, will be an emergency executive government trying, from one crisis and improvisation to another, to navigate its way out of what is the most appalling national collapse in history. This crisis is often described as a deeper version of the Great Depression in America. In fact, the ex-Soviet Union is in much worse condition, nearer to that of post-World War II Germany and Japan. Its infrastructure is crumbling. Aeroflot no longer has adequate fuel, its planes decrepit and disintegrating; the collapse of the railroads is not far off; the oil industry is a similar shambles. At the same time, factories now function mainly through barter. This is a situation that in any country leads to emergency government. We should not forget that Franklin Roosevelt in 1933 governed largely by decree, and with the aid of Young Turks known as a "brain-trust," or that the Mother of the Parliaments in 1940 suspended elections during the war, with the result that Britain went ten years without a vote. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was an executive decree. Perhaps we should be prepared to allow "Czar" Boris a similar leeway, as well as the margin to make a number of mistakes.

For the task in Russia now is difficult beyond anything the privileged West has ever known. Not only must a modern society be built out of the unprecedented wreckage of the late Soviet economy and polity, but this building must be done by a population that until 1991 was molded and deformed by the Leninist lie. As the matter was put, on the day the Union died, by one longtime Party member who always knew the system was a fraud: "And we must now try to produce good out of all that evil." •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Two Women

So many films these days from so many countries are brutal or stupid or formulaic—or any combination of these—that those qualities seem to define what films *are*. Of course we remember that there have been other kinds of films or we wouldn't be so frequently disgusted, but we almost start to think that another age has dawned, or lowered, in which those other kinds are passé. So it's heartening to be reminded that this is facile despair. Two such reminders: two new films made—coincidentally—by women, one a veteran, one a newcomer. Both deal with ethnic sources, both are historical, both are somewhat long and dreamy. (And both are first presented outside conventional theater venues, although they will be released generally.)

Memoirs of a River (Castle Hill) was written and directed by Judit Elek, who has been a figure in Hungarian film since 1961. (It was shown at the new Walter Reade Theater in New York, of which more next week.) The subject is the last trial of Jews for ritual murder in Hungary. The year is 1882. A group of loggers, mostly Jews, are rafting along a river toward the forests where they will work, when a woman's corpse floats up to their raft. They take it ashore, and the local constable, already established as anti-Semitic, concocts a story to connect the dead woman with the murder of a woman in a nearby town, whose blood was allegedly used in Passover services. With torture (the film *is* brutal in those scenes but not extraneously so), the constable gets the confessions he wants, and after a year or so of waiting in prison, the trial is held. The judge is fair-minded, the evidence shaky, and the prisoners are freed.

This is the nub, but the nub of this film is like some opera librettos—not much more than the means of justifying the arias, duos, trios, etc. Elek's story, while hardly trivial, is the occasion to display ways of life, particularly among rural Jews, in those days; subtleties of character and interplay; the vastness of the landscape and its effect on these people; the low ostinato of anti-Semitism among gentiles working alongside Jews; the mingling of languages (I heard Hungarian, Yiddish, German—perhaps there were more); and, by no means least, the faces. Like many European directors, Elek has an eye for faces and has some good ones to choose among.

Elek's flaws come from her assets. She has such deep feeling for her people and the countryside in which they live that she lingers overlong on details, and she indulges in picturesque posing of noble working men, something like the Soviet films of the 1930s. Her screenplay is also a bit dispersed. It opens with a long sequence about a lone Jewish shepherd in a mountain hut tending his sheep, a sequence that ends with blood and a chase; but the function of that shepherd in the subsequent story is so minor that the lengthy prelude seems unnecessary. *Memoirs* runs 147 minutes and would be stronger if it were twenty minutes shorter.

Note: I was surprised, considering the history of Jews in Hungary, by the just verdict in the trial. I'm sure that Elek is accurate, but perhaps that verdict helps to explain how the film got made—even in the liberated days of 1989.

Julie Dash is a young American black woman who has made several short films about black women and, with the aid of PBS, NEA, and other public and private sponsors, has now completed her first feature. **Daughters of the Dust** (Kino International) had its New York premiere at the Film Forum and is one more instance of how salutary that institution is for the film audience in New York and, eventually, in the country. This is not to say that Dash's film is a towering accomplishment (for the first ten minutes or so, patience battled impatience within me); but it is most certainly the work of a gifted, empathic, purposeful, unchic filmmaker.

The setting is one of the sea islands off Georgia-South Carolina (visited recently in *The Prince of Tides*). The year is 1902. The sea and sky, the wide lone beaches are delicately shot by Arthur Jafa, Dash's husband. The clothes, especially the floating white dresses of the women, are affectingly designed by Arline Burk. Indeed, Dash (something like Elek) is so entranced with the landscape and the people that she lingers too long on some shots and includes others that might helpfully have been omitted.

This, plus the occasionally strained lyricism in the screenplay (by Dash), the conscious posings of groups, the fre-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Bugsy. *Love, 1940s gangster style. Warren Beatty as the late unlamented Bugsy Siegel, Annette Bening as his tough-but-tender woman. (And Ben Kingsley, who once was Gandhi, as the crime boss Meyer Lansky!) (Reviewed 12/23/91)* **JFK.** *There really is a film of that name under all the press uproar—smashingly made, well worth seeing for filmic reasons. But take the historical and conspiratorial speculation with a ton of salt. (1/27/92)* **Kafka.** *A feeble script, some adroit directing. Steven Soderbergh, who made* sex, lies, and videotape, *shows he can also handle mid-European 1920s expressionism. (1/6&13/92)* **Prospero's Books.** *The privilege of hearing John Gielgud speak Prospero and some other roles in* The Tempest, *accompanied by Peter Greenaway's gorgeous if not clearly relevant pictures. (1/20/92)* **—SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

quent shots of single figures on the beach facing the sea, makes the film seem extravagantly poetic from beginning to end and makes that end seem somewhat slow to arrive. But Dash has such firm subscription to what she is doing, such clear intent toward a beautiful shape that the film becomes what she wants it to be: a visual ode to the theme of transition.

The story is slight, which is all to the good. The people are a Gullah family (Gullahs are the blacks on these islands, who have a dialect of their own) whose members gather for a reunion—some coming from afar—before most of them immigrate to the North. They are quite conscious of their African origins: one old man even remembers arriving in a slave ship. Among them are a few who still hold to African religion. At one point the family matriarch fastens a small totem to a Bible, hands it around, and most people kiss both totem and Bible. The film's overall sense is that this island, despite the decades-long residence of the family, was a way-station between Africa and the Northern states.

A voice-over is used, a unique one. It's the voice of a young woman. We see this woman's mother, pregnant with her, choosing to remain on the island. When grown, she recounts and comments.

In the all-black cast, I recognized only one actor, Tommy Hicks, who was the leading man in Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*; here he is a photographer who has come over from the mainland to do pictures of the family. Outstanding among the others, all of whom are vivid, are Cora Lee Day, as the 88-year-old matriarch of the clan, and Barbara-O, as a family member who has been a prostitute in Cuba and who returns to take her place in this family saga. The sensitive score by John Barnes helps to contrast and blend several cultures.

Consciously or not, Dash asks for our patience while she investigates her powers. Unquestionably she has talent—in shaping a screenplay and in directing it. Let's hope that her confidence in her talent grows, that she can consider it demonstrated, so that now she can use it more stringently. In that hope it's a pleasure to welcome her. •

Herbert Muschamp on Architecture

The Wrong Prescription

Earth, air, water, fire: no American building welcomes the visitor to a more elemental realm than Louis Kahn's Salk Institute for Biological Studies in La Jolla, California. I have no idea whether Kahn intended an explicit analogy between Jonas Salk's advanced research and the four elements of ancient science. But Kahn seems to have never undertaken any project without trying to imagine himself back at the origin of things. Nowhere did he exercise that imagination more persuasively than in these two laboratory buildings and the courtyard that joins them atop the La Jolla cliffs. The sea, the sun, the sky, and the cliffs are as elemental to Kahn's architecture as the concrete, the travertine, the wood, and the glass that he assembled on the site.

In January the Salk Institute (designed and built between 1959 and 1965) received the Twenty-Five Year Award from the American Institute of Architects. No building is more deserving. Still, I suspect that many who have visited the Salk would agree that in this instance a quarter century salute seems almost an impertinence. We're talking pyramids here: a monument that asks to be judged by the measure of centuries, and almost looks as though it's been around that long. That impression is heightened by the building's contrast with the fast-lane culture that provides the prelude to a visit. Particularly if you're exhilarated by a spin down Route 405, you will want to pause a moment in the Institute's parking lot, which is really an open air decompression chamber for recovering the use of your feet. This is architecture you don't pass at highway speeds.

You approach the buildings through a grove of eucalyptus trees, a permeable wall, the choir screen before a sanctuary. For it is indeed ecclesiastical architecture. Built with money from the March of Dimes, dedicated to the ongoing battle against disease, the Salk is a modern descendent of the old world's plague churches. Like the Salute in Venice or Palladio's great Redontore, Kahn's masterwork is a votive church to science.

Today the grove looks somewhat scrappy, which only accentuates the plot's earthiness as a foil for the vision veiled by the trees: first, sky; then, as you walk through the grove, the roof lines of the two laboratory buildings that rise up ahead on either side. The roof lines look saw-toothed, an effect of the angled windows of the study towers attached to the labs, and as you move closer the roof lines slice through the sky like two serrated blades, carving it into a solid block of space that descends to fill the central court.

You enter this void—the sanctuary itself—through a second screen, again of trees, but this time of clipped, regularly spaced orange trees, a green hinge between the grove and the symmetric geometry of Kahn's buildings. Straight ahead is the Pacific and, often, hang gliders spreading rainbow wings. Upward reflections sculpt the space into form: the glaring rectangular solid of light, bounced upward from the court's travertine paving stones, is set off by a larger arc of radiance rising from the water. As the afternoon progresses, the void becomes nearly material as it fills up with the sunlight's increasingly dense gold.

The light—captured with stunning fidelity by Grant Mudford's photographs in an essential new book, *Louis I. Kahn: In the Realm of Architecture* by David B. Brownlee and David G. DeLong (Rizzoli)—is more awesome even than the light of Venice, because the surroundings offer so little distraction: no ogee windows, mosaics, arched bridges, or Harry's Bar. Instead, there are the proportions of the laboratories, the thickness of their concrete walls, and a mottled bloom on the surface of the concrete that picks up the light and gives the walls a miragelike shimmer. A narrow canal of water runs down the center of the court, a perspective line that draws the water from the horizon to your feet.

Kahn initially planned to line the sides of the canal with cypress trees, perhaps an allusion to Hadrian's Villa, which, along with the monastery of San Francisco at Assisi, provided him with historical points of departure. It was Luis Barragán, Mexico's great Modernist architect, who suggested that the court remain bare. He argued that a view of the ocean horizon would create sufficient closure to unify the complex. But unity suggests a classical composure that is elusive here. The effect is closer to the uncanny classicism of de Chirico: a stage too stark for repose. From time to time, figures cross the court, but they don't linger. Wearing long white lab coats, they resemble not people but props, mechanical swans in some Brutalist ballet.

The uncanniness thickens as you proceed along the canal, past the angled surfaces of the study towers, concrete cliffs that "open" as you pass to reveal windows

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

handsomely framed with weathered teak. Never was openness so transparently shut. The views from inside are spectacular, but from without the windows gape along a ghost town Main Street. Cypresses, hell; the place cries out for tumbleweed.

The labs themselves dramatize Kahn's distinction between "served" and "servant" spaces, between enclosures for people and for building mechanics. Each six-story lab building (two of the floors are below grade) is a triple sandwich: lab floors alternate with three "interstitial spaces" filled with conduits, compressors, tubes that siphon off waste. This arrangement allows the labs to be quickly refitted to accommodate the researchers' changing needs. And what a grand gesture to build luxury suites for plumbing! Threading my way one afternoon through the labs' vaporous innards, I remembered "stinks," colloquial for the natural sciences, Auden recalls in "The Greeks and Us," an essay on British middle-class education. Stinks were the Modern Side, history and mathematics the more socially acceptable Classical Side. At the Salk, a classicist places himself at the service of stinks—here classicism exchanges its high literary gloss for the hard crust of fossils—and in that subservience ennobles both.

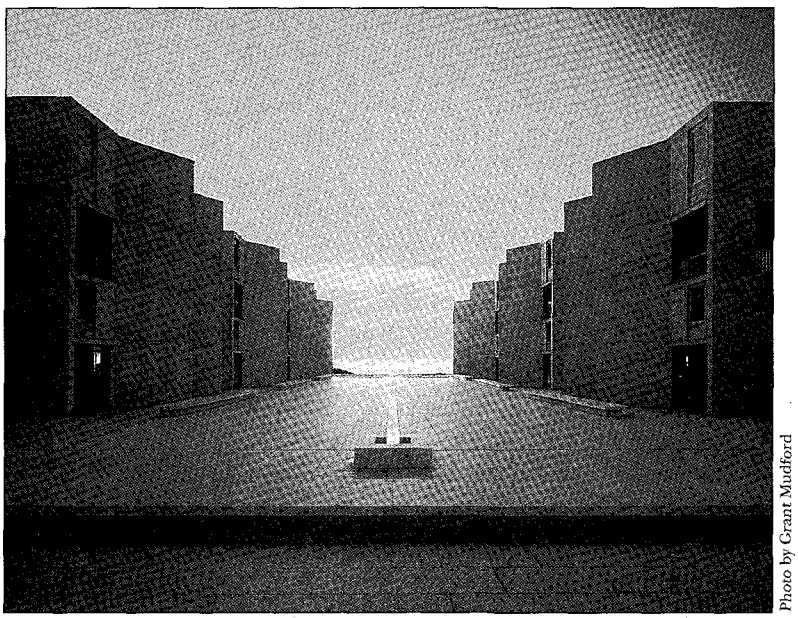


Photo by Grant Mudford

SALK INSTITUTE FOR BIOLOGICAL STUDIES

Go in the middle or late afternoon, but go quickly, for the integrity of Kahn's work is now in jeopardy. A year ago Salk unveiled plans for a new building that would seriously compromise the power of Kahn's work. What he envisions are two rectangular buildings (containing meeting rooms, administrative offices, and additional lab space) set end to end, perpendicular to the axis of Kahn's labs, on a portion of the grove. (The size of the portion varies with different versions of the design.) A cylindrical structure between the two wings would serve as a reception area. Groundbreaking for the revision, originally scheduled for early last year, has been postponed; perhaps the best way to celebrate the Salk's Twenty-Five Year Award would be to cancel the unfortunate scheme altogether.

The addition's most conspicuous impact would be to obstruct the dynamic unfolding of space that visitors activate by passing through the grove. Besides eliminating the gradual unveiling of the labs and the space that they carve, the new addition would impose a strict axial approach on them by channeling visitors through the reception kiosk. A parallel could be drawn between the pathways through the grove and the narrow medieval streets that once intensified the experience of entering St. Peter's Square. Like the bombastic Via della Conciliazione, the addition would weaken the power of the open space it seeks to enhance. Salk has described the grove as a drainage ditch. Alas, it would drain away more than water.

Another problem, less easily described, concerns not only formal matters but also Salk's philosophical ambitions. What he originally envisioned for the Institute was far grander than a lab. He and Kahn first discussed the project in 1959, the year that C. P. Snow delivered his widely publicized lecture on the "two cultures." Salk saw the Institute as a place where people of the sciences and people of the humanities could meet and bridge the gulf between them. In a famous remark, Salk charged Kahn with designing a place in which he would feel comfortable receiving Picasso. He hoped that the Institute could find formulas for healing culture as well as bodies.

Though the two labs were designed for science, their binary configuration may owe something to this idea. Or perhaps the idea and the formal arrangement both sprang from something deeper in Salk's way of thinking. In any case, the power of the central court arises from the absence of formal hierarchy between the two separate but equal labs. At the focal point, where you would expect to see a monumental form (think for instance, of the Capitol on the Mall, or the Rotunda at the University of Virginia), there are hang gliders hovering in space. While the addition would not shatter the symmetry, it would reduce the tension between the two vertical slabs. Instead of maintaining a separation between them, and demonstrating the spatial eloquence of which separation is capable, the two halves of the binary system would, in effect, merge.

The proposed addition falls short in other ways, too. Nothing could contrast more sharply with the functional clarity of Kahn's labs than this confused programmatic jumble of meeting rooms, labs, offices, and areas for public reception, all wrapped up together in vaguely Kahnesque walls. It grates to contemplate such a structure raised in close proximity to Kahn's masterful integration of program and form. Worse, the addition would weaken the Institute's integral relationship to the land that it occupies. The eucalyptus grove does not scream something; it says something. It says that we are leaving an urban world and entering a natural domain, a place where buildings and land are joined on an intermediary plane between the microbe and the comsos. As Harriet Pettison, a landscape architect who worked with Kahn, points out, the proposed addition is an urban building: its design is oblivious to the Institute's coastal terrain. To place it between the parking lot and the court would shatter the logical sequence of walking from the place of cars onto primal ground.

This is not a simple case of protecting a landmark building from the bad guys. Salk's stature as a humanitarian hero for a generation of American families is not architecturally irrelevant. The primary function of a plague church, after all, was to ward off disease or to offer thanksgiving for deliverance from it. So long as we place our faith in science, we have a stake in Salk's right to run his own show. And the building would not exist had Salk not selected Kahn to design it, nor would it have attained its present form had he not developed an extraordinary rapport with Kahn while they worked on the design. As Kahn acknowledged, it was Salk who urged that a single open court would be stronger than the two courts the architect proposed in an earlier scheme. In the basement of the north lab, you can still see the patchwork wall where the two worked together to perfect the con-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

crete's extraordinary finish.

Moreover, much as we may want to freeze the building in its present of grace, the fact remains that the Salk is an unfinished work; what we see today is one-third of the complex that Kahn designed. A meeting house for the Institute's fellows was to be located on a promontory overlooking the water to the north; Kahn also designed a housing complex for a corresponding site to the south. These two parts were conceived to face each other across the ravine that cuts a triangle into the bluffs, with the lab buildings rising at its apex. Kahn's master plan, in other words, employed the kind of hierarchical organization that is now fortuitously absent. As it stands, only the hang gliders are in a position to appreciate what Kahn evidently intended: the Salk's true facade faces the sea. Spectacular though the existing entrance may be, in fact we come in through the back door.

Perhaps that is why Salk does not quite grasp why people are upset by his proposal. My impression, after a conversation with Salk some months before plans for the addition were made public, is that this may be literally a case of lost perspective: the man has been at the heart of the building for so long that he may no longer perceive what visitors from the outside journey to see. Clearly Salk reveres Kahn, and takes great pride in their collaboration. He believes that he has done well by Kahn in hiring John MacAllister, an architect who worked on the original buildings, to design the proposed addition. And although MacAllister's design is an architectural muddle, Salk could make the case that it would allow him to *un*muddle Kahn's work by removing from the south lab offices that were placed there pending completion of the master plan.

Salk is well aware of the explosion of outrage that prevented a proposed addition to Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth. He emphasized to me that his addition, unlike the Kimbell's, would not come into physical contact with Kahn's forms. Of course, since the Salk's principal form is unbounded space, that claim has little meaning. To support his plan, Salk has in hand two drawings from Kahn's office that locate a reception building on the site he has chosen. But Pettison, who prepared one of these drawings, maintains that this was a tentative sketch, done at Salk's request, and that Kahn himself opposed it.

So why not complete the master plan that Kahn designed? Salk has apparently not ruled out the possibility of building Kahn's meeting house at some point in the future; but, unlike the new addition, the plans for the meeting house do not provide space for new labs. There's also an economic incentive to build on the grove site, since it would enable the new facility to tap into the underground plant that services the existing labs.

Fortunately, Salk is willing to listen to critics of his proposal. Following a round of protest letters from a number of prominent American architects, he has met privately with several of them to discuss their objections. He has already modified his original proposal, shifting the site of the new buildings about thirty feet to the east, which would preserve a portion of the grove. He has also indicated that he is open to other suggestions. The best of these so far has been volunteered by Kahn's former associate Anne Griswold Tyng. Tyng suggests breaking apart the two halves of the addition, rotating them ninety degrees (so that they would lie parallel with Kahn's labs), and shifting them out to the north and south edges of the parking lot. An underground connection between the two parts could provide space for additional facilities. Tyng's proposal does not pretend to be architecture; its advantage is that it would have only peripheral impact on Kahn's building.

But some who have spoken with Salk believe that he *wants* to interpose a barrier between the Institute and the world. He may feel, in fact, that he is performing an act of architectural preservation, by putting up what amounts to a dike between Kahn's buildings and the wave of development that in recent years has swept this part of San Diego. I would speculate, too, that Salk would like to resolve the tension of the architecture's binary configuration. A set of conceptual diagrams prepared by his architects uses shaded and bisected circles to develop what resembles a Jungian motif of "dualities and unity." Perhaps Salk believes that his building can symbolically fuse the dualisms that his Institute set out to bridge. But to attempt such an occult philosophical reconciliation with this design would be a tragic error. And it would be redundant, besides. Jonas Salk already bridged the "two cultures" twenty-five years ago, when he collaborated with Louis Kahn on one of the century's supreme works of art. Now it's up to him alone to guard the bridge. •

The origins of Greece and the illusions of Afrocentrists.

Not Out of Africa

BY MARY LEFKOWITZ

I.

The principal text in our second-year Greek course is Plato's *Apology*, his account of the trial of Socrates. We stick with this traditional text, even though it is hard for students who have had time to learn only the bare essentials of Greek grammar, because it deals with so many matters that are central to our civilization. Should a man be condemned for his beliefs, if they differ from the majority's? Why did the majority make a judgment that is now universally regarded as unfair? How could Socrates think that no man would willingly commit an evil act? Important questions, all; but several years ago I had a student who seemed to regard virtually everything I said about Socrates with hostility. Before she graduated, she explained why she had been suspicious of me and my classes: her instructor in another course had told her that Socrates (as suggested by the flat nose in some portrait sculptures) was black. The instructor had also taught that classicists universally refuse to mention the African origins of Socrates because they do not want their students to know that the so-called legacy of ancient Greece was stolen from Egypt.

Further study persuaded this student that most of what she had heard in this other course could not have been strictly accurate. Because Socrates was an Athenian citizen, he must have had Athenian parents; and since foreigners couldn't become naturalized Athenian citizens, he must have come from the same ethnic background as every other Athenian. Even though Greeks in Socrates' day did not pay much attention to skin color, or more generally to physical appearance, they did care about nationality. If Socrates had been a foreigner, from Africa or any other place, he would not have been an Athenian cit-

MARY LEFKOWITZ is Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Wellesley College. She is co-editor and translator of the sourcebook *Women's Life in Greece and Rome* (Johns Hopkins University Press).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

izen. It was as simple as that.

Meanwhile another student wrote to complain that we had sponsored, as part of our Bad Ancient History Film series, a screening of the film *Cleopatra*, starring Elizabeth Taylor. The student had grounds for complaint; Taylor's sexpot Cleopatra certainly had little in common with the charming, manipulative queen whom Plutarch describes, the woman who spoke many languages and captivated everyone with her conversation. But no, this student was indignant for a different reason: Elizabeth Taylor is, after all, a white woman, whereas Cleopatra was black. We did our best to persuade the student that, on the basis of Cleopatra's ancestry (and her name), Cleopatra was a member of the Macedonian Greek dynasty that had imposed itself on Egypt, and that despite her fluency in the Egyptian language, the style of her dress, and the luxury of her court, she was in origin a Greek.

Now, classicists in the late modern world have more than enough grounds for paranoia. We are reminded daily that our subject is useless, irrelevant, boring—all the things that, in our opinion, it is not. But now a new set of charges has been added. Not only students, but also the many academic acolytes of Martin Bernal's influential theories about "the Afroasiatic roots of Western civilization," and Bernal himself, ask us to acknowledge that we have been racists and liars, the perpetrators of a vast intellectual and cultural cover-up, or at the very least the suppressors of an African past that, until our students and our colleagues began to mention it, we had ourselves known nothing about.

Had our teachers deceived us, and their teachers deceived them? Classicists should be perfectly willing to ask themselves these questions, because we know, at least as well as our critics, that much of our so-called knowledge of the past is based on educated guesswork and sensible conjectures. In my own lifetime I have seen many histories and many textbooks rewritten to take account of new finds. Before the Mycenean "Linear B" syllabary was deciphered in 1952, many scholars believed that people who lived in Greece and Crete between the sixteenth and twelfth centuries B.C. spoke a language other than Greek. When the tablets written in Linear B script were deciphered, however, it became clear that Greek had been spoken in settlements such as Mycenae and Knossos. That is, the world described by Homer was, in some basic sense, real.

If we had once thought that Homer's world was imaginary, it is conceivable that our notions of the origins of the Greeks might also be based on uncertain premises. Before it was known that in the second millennium B.C. the inhabitants of Mycenae and other settlements spoke Greek, students of the ancient world imagined that there was a kernel of truth in the Greek myths about the invasion of Greek-speaking tribes, known as the Dorians, after the twelfth century. Some textbooks still follow the outline of the Greek myth of the "races" of man, which tells of a distinct separation between the Bronze (Mycenaean) Age and the Iron (Dorian) Age, whereas in fact there seems to have been considerable cultural and linguistic continuity from the twelfth century to the eighth century B.C. And until our own century, relatively little importance was attributed to the influence of Semitic peoples, such as the Phoenicians, on the civilization in mainland Greece. Until very recently, moreover, the Greek alphabet was regarded as a relatively late invention, coming into general use only after the beginning of the eighth century B.C. Now Semiticists insist that the shape of the letters shows that the Greek alphabet was modeled on the characters of a much earlier version of the Phoenician syllabary, perhaps from the tenth century B.C., perhaps even earlier.

If classicists managed to get all these things wrong, isn't it possible that they have ignored Egyptian and African elements in Greek culture? It is possible. But there is, for a start, the slightly touchy matter of the intention behind this alleged ignorance. The students who believed that Socrates and Cleopatra were black assumed that we had deliberately tried to deny them the truth, that we had used (or misused) history as yet another means of enforcing European political domination on Africa. In their view, classicists are propagandists from the White European Ministry of Classical Culture. In our view, however, classicists are historians who try to look at the past critically, without prejudice of any kind, so far as humanly possible. If classicists have indeed misinterpreted the facts about the Greeks' past, they have not done so willingly. I know that I run the risk, in the aftermath of Foucault and poststructuralism, of seeming naive in my belief that some kind of objectivity is possible; but I do stubbornly believe that classicists and ancient historians would have been only too delighted to discover the true answer, whatever it was, *if it were possible to know it.*

No responsible historian of antiquity would deny that it is possible to misinterpret the facts, either through ignorance or malice; but the open discussion of scholarly research has made it rather difficult to conceal or to manufacture facts without arousing the skepticism or the scorn of colleagues. There are, after all, canons of evidence and standards of argument. For the student of ancient history, moreover, it is often the case that certainty is impossible. The classicist frequently deals with sources that are partial and scattershot and essentially obscure. To speak with complete confidence, without any tincture of doubt, about some of the great controversies is to betray a misunderstanding of what classicists do.

Still, the absence of certainty does not mean that any interpretation is as valid as any other. Even when the evidence is less precise or less tangible than we would like it to be, some explanations are still more likely than others. Thus, if Socrates and his parents had had dark skin and other African racial features, some of his contemporaries would have been likely to mention it, because this, and not just his eccentric ideas about the gods and the voices that spoke to him alone would have distinguished him from the rest of the Athenians. Unless, of course, all the rest of the Athenians also had African origins; but then why are they not depicted as Africans in their art?

There is also another matter that must be cleared up before a serious discussion of the relationship of ancient Greece to ancient Africa can take place, and that is

Black Athena:
The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization Volume I: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985
Volume II: The Archaeological and Documentary Evidence
by Martin Bernal
(Rutgers University Press, 575 pp. and 736 pp., $15.95 and $17.95 paper, respectively)

Cadmean Letters
by Martin Bernal
(Eisenbrauns, 156 pp., $19.50)

The African Origin of Civilization
by Cheikh Anta Diop
translated by Mercer Cook
(Lawrence Hill, 317 pp., $11.95 paper)

Stolen Legacy
by George G. M. James
(United Brothers Communications Systems, 190 pp., $13.95 paper)

Africa, Mother of Western Civilization
by Yosef ben-Jochanan
(Black Classic Press, 717 pp., $34.95)

Introduction to African Civilization
by John G. Jackson
(Carol Publishing Group, 384 pp., $8.95 paper)

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the distinction between influence and origins. This distinction appears to have been lost in the din of the great Afrocentrism debate. For this reason, it cannot be too much emphasized: to show influence is not to show origin. One people or culture may introduce its ideas or its symbols or its artifacts to another people or culture, but the difference between the peoples and the cultures may remain. Borrowings, even when they can be demonstrated, are only borrowings. They do not, in most cases, amount to a transformation of identity. And even when borrowings do overwhelm a people or a culture sufficiently to transform it, they still shed little light on the actual historical beginnings of the borrowers.

The evidence of Egyptian *influence* on certain aspects of Greek culture is plain and undeniable, though surely it must be pointed out that other Mediterranean civilizations also had important influences on Greek (and Egyptian) culture, so that the picture of who came first, and who took or loaned what to whom, is anything but clear. But the evidence of Egyptian *origins* for Greek culture is another thing entirely. The principal reason that students of antiquity have not given the Africans or the Egyptians primary credit for the achievements of Greek civilization is that Greek culture was separate and different from Egyptian or African culture. It was divided from them by language and by genealogy.

II.

Given the nature of the evidence, or rather the lack of it, it is not at all surprising that modern scholars hold many conflicting opinions about the true origins of the Greeks and their civilization. But the situation is further complicated by the tendency of all modern cultures to make the Greeks like themselves, or at least to give priority to the aspects of Greek culture that they themselves most admire. In grade school we were taught about Athenian democracy, but not about the widespread slavery that supported it, or the other governmental systems in Greece that coexisted alongside it, including some fairly brutal tyrannies. Democracy and the other accomplishments of Greek civilization, however real or imaginary, remain so precious to us that virtually every modern civilization has wanted to claim them for itself.

It was inevitable, therefore, that the black peoples in the English-speaking countries of this continent, as they developed a sense of their own identity, would want to show that they had a stake in the cultural legacy of ancient Greece. Marcus Garvey (1887-1940), the founder of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, began to study history while he was a teenager in Jamaica, and he used his knowledge of Egyptian and African history to help promote racial emancipation. As Tony Martin writes in *Race First*, his comprehensive biography of Garvey, "History, like everything else for Garvey, was a subject to be used for the furtherance of racial emancipation. He used history first to establish a grievance—to show that the black man had been wronged."

Garvey thought of history as a means of instilling self-confidence in a people who had lost faith in themselves and had been compelled to lose touch with their past. In his essay "Who and What is a Negro?" (1923), he wrote:

> The white world has always tried to rob and discredit us of our history.... Every student of history, of impartial mind, knows that the Negro once ruled the world, when white men were savages and barbarians living in caves; that thousands of Negro professors at that time taught in the universities in Alexandria, then the seat of learning; that ancient Egypt gave the world civilization and that Greece and Rome have robbed Egypt of her arts and letters, and taken all the credit to themselves.

Garvey's claims are not supported by the citation of any archaeological or linguistic data. It was not his purpose to assess the evidence objectively. He was not a historian; he had a use for the past. He needed the past to show that it was not the fault of black people that they appeared to have no great historical achievements to look back on, because European whites had conspired to steal the credit for all the great achievements of past civilizations:

> Out of cold old Europe these white men came,
> From caves, dens and holes, without any fame,
> Eating their dead's flesh and sucking their blood,
> Relics of the Mediterranean flood;
> Literature, science and art they stole,
> After Africa had measured each pole,
> Asia taught them what great learning was,
> Now they frown on what the Coolie does.

Contemporaries like W. E. B. DuBois objected to Garvey's methods; but the theory of white conspiracy survived him, and it has been explored by other writers, particularly in recent years. By now it has developed into what amounts to a new philosophy of black history. The post-Garvey school of historians objects to the way that Europeans have discredited African contributions to civilization, and more generally to the European methods of distinguishing fact from fiction. According to Molefi Kete Asante, the chair of the African American Studies Department at Temple University and the author of *Afrocentricity and Knowledge*, black historians finally have been freed from dependence on "Eurocentric frames of reference." In Asante's opinion, the scholar who has done most to release Afrocentric historians from this dependency is the Senegalese historian Cheikh Anta Diop.

In *The African Origin of Civilization*, a work originally published in French in 1967, Diop claimed that Europeans have consistently falsified evidence that suggests that the Egyptians were black-skinned. He traces Egyptian influence on Greece back to prehistoric times, claiming that Cecrops (a half-snake/half-man whom the Athenians themselves regarded as indigenous) came to Attica from Egypt, and Danaus (who, according to the Greeks, was of Greek descent) taught the Greeks agriculture and metallurgy. According to Diop, Greek mythology reflects the resentment of the Indo-Europeans against this cultural domination. Cadmus was driven out of Thebes; Orestes' murder of his mother, Clytemnestra, celebrates the triumph of patriarchy over matriarchy; Aeneas rejects and abandons Dido. The white world rejected the ideas of other cultures as soon as it could—and "this is the meaning of the *Aeneid*."

Another influential Afrocentric work appeared in the 1950s, and has been reissued. George G. M. James's *Stolen Legacy* (1954) offers a detailed account of how Greek philosophers derived most of their doctrines from the secret Egyptian mysteries preserved in Masonic cult: "The term Greek philosophy, to begin with, is a misnomer, for there is no such philosophy in existence." James claims that the basic doctrines in Aristotle's *De Anima* were based on the Egyptian Book of the Dead. And on the basis of anecdotes related by the gossipy ancient biographer Diogenes Laertius, James concludes that Plato stole the ideas for his *Republic* and *Timaeus* from other Greek philosophers. Thus Plato is doubly unreliable: he stole his ideas from Greeks who in turn stole them from the Egyptians.

James suggests various ways in which the knowledge of the Egyptian mysteries could have been brought to Greece from Egypt. Certain Greek wise men studied there, such as Solon and Pythagoras. Because Aristotle had been his tutor, Alexander the Great gave the philosopher the money that he needed to buy books for his Academy in Athens. Other Afrocentric scholars have gone still further in the interpretation of Aristotle; not content with the notion that the Greeks simply failed to acknowledge the Egyptian sources of their wisdom, Yosef ben-Jochanan states, in *Africa, Mother of Western Civilization* (1971), that Aristotle began to write his philosophy only after

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"he totally sacked the temples and lodges of the African Mysteries in Egypt upon his arrival in 332 B.C.E. with Alexander the Great."

Not a single one of these assertions about cultural expropriation and scholarly dishonesty can be directly substantiated from ancient sources. Not one responsible ancient author (certainly not Aristotle) doubted that Plato wrote the *Republic* and the *Timaeus*. There is no reason to believe that Aristotle had much contact with Alexander after he ceased to be his tutor, before 338 B.C. It is simply untrue, to the best of my knowledge, to claim that Greek philosophy was stolen from Egyptian sources. There is no evidence whatever for James's claim that Alexander took books from the library at Alexandria—which was founded long after his death—to give to Aristotle, or for ben-Jochanan's assertion that Aristotle came to Egypt with him and sacked the temples of ideas and books.

Corrections and criticisms such as these, however, do not seem to matter: they are based, after all, on European sources, which are by nature suspect. It is axiomatic for the Afrocentric authors that there has been, since antiquity, a European conspiracy to suppress evidence of African origins, and therefore any argument that a European makes against them, especially on the basis of European writings, ancient or modern, can be regarded ipso facto as invalid.

The Afrocentric description of ancient history has been circulating in print for at least seventy years, but it is only since the late 1960s that Afrocentric ideas have begun to be included in the curricula of the most prominent universities in this country, and it is only in the last several years, as a result of the "canon wars," that they have begun to be taken seriously by historians who might themselves have been otherwise regarded as Eurocentric. The debate has significant consequences for the teaching of Greco-Roman antiquity. For, if the Greeks and the Romans and the people who teach about their civilization have all suppressed the truth, why should the classics (and the European literatures that drew inspiration from them) occupy a privileged place in the curriculum, or any place at all? I myself would agree that they should be eliminated, if these charges could be shown by any objective standard to be true. If...

III.

Where did the Greeks themselves think that they came from? No surviving Greek author, not even Herodotus, attempts to provide anything like a systematic historical account. Presumably the question did not interest them: they seem not even to have imagined that as a population they were anything but indigenous. The Athenians believed that they were *autochthonous*, that is, sprung from the ground (*chthon*) itself. The Myrmidons, the soldiers who came with Achilles to Troy, would have said that their ancestors were ants, or *myrmekes*, turned by Zeus into men to be companions for Achilles' grandfather Aeacus. Some Thebans spoke of themselves as the descendants of the "sown men" who sprang up from the teeth of the dragon killed by Cadmus, the founder of their city.

Whoever the Greeks may have been, and whatever stories they preferred to tell about their origins, they believed that their ancestors were born in the land that their descendants inhabited, that the language they spoke was their own, and that one of their own gods or people invented their system of writing. They called all foreign peoples, whatever their origin or language, barbarians, *barbaroi*, that is, people who, instead of speaking Greek, spoke nonsense, *barbar*. (They did not seem to know or to care that the word "barbarian" is itself a loanword, from the Babylonian-Sumerian *barbaru*, "foreigner.")

Still, despite this strong sense of unique identity, several Greek myths acknowledge that there were some connections, however tenuous and temporary, between the Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples. Cadmus himself was said to have come to Thebes from Phoenicia, bringing some of his own people with him. Pelops, the founder of the Olympian games, was said to have been a Lydian. Io, daughter of the king of Argos, was exiled to Egypt by the jealous goddess Hera, and later her descendants the Danaids sought asylum in her homeland. The Corinthian hero Bellerophon was exiled to Asia Minor carrying a letter with "baneful signs" that the King of Lycia was able to interpret; Bellerophon's descendants settled in Lycia and later fought with the Trojans against the Greeks.

How "true" are these myths? We must, as always, proceed with caution. The myths appear to represent history only in the most general way. They mention the names of real places, but they do not attempt an accurate picture of who their inhabitants were or how they lived. Myths are resolutely anachronistic and tend to give only a vague impression of actual time. For historians, they can serve at best as a general guide to the existence of a particular place or its inhabitants. Although Mycenae, for example, was only a small town in the fifth century B.C., according to the myth of the Trojan War there was an important settlement at Mycenae toward the end of the second millennium B.C. The general truth of the myth has since been confirmed by archaeological excavation.

The myths that mention foreign places seem also to be "true" in this same general way. They confirm that in the second millennium B.C. civilizations large enough to trade with and to visit existed in Egypt, Phoenicia, Mesopotamia, and parts of Asia Minor. But they can tell us nothing more specific about the movements of peoples, about the languages that they spoke, about the particular wars that they fought. That Danaus came to Greece from Egypt, that Cadmus came from Phoenicia, or that Pelops came from Lydia tells us no less and no more than that the Greeks had contact with those places. If the myths of their arrival in Greece represent anything more substantial than a trade mission or a piratical raid, archaeology has not confirmed it.

It was only as a result of the Persian Wars in the early fifth century B.C., in which they were almost defeated, that the Greeks became aware of, and began to celebrate, the unique features of their own civilization. But even when they became interested in the difference between themselves and other peoples, such as the Persians or the Egyptians, they seem never to have asked in any systematic way whether or not they might at some much earlier time have been influenced by the civilizations of their neighbors or derived from the same origins. We know that Greeks visited Egypt in the seventh century B.C.; but the only explicit description of Egypt that has come down to us dates from around the 430s B.C. Its author was Herodotus.

Herodotus, a Greek from Halicarnassus on the coast of Asia Minor, claimed that he traveled around Egypt, and wrote with admiration and appreciation of the antiquity and the achievements of Egyptian civilization. He recorded the names of some of their kings, and he described the pyramids. But curiously (at least from a modern point of view) he said nothing about the Egyptian features in archaic Greek art, and nothing about language, with one apparent exception: the names of the gods. About those names he said that he "learned by inquiry" that "the names of almost all of the gods came from Egypt to Greece," with the exception of the gods whose names the Egyptians did not know. Those gods, Herodotus claimed, were named by the Pelasgians, the first people to settle in the Greek mainland, with the exception of Poseidon, who was Libyan. And after talking with priests at a temple near the mouth of the Nile, he discovered that the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tragic poet Aeschylus had "snatched" from local stories the myth that the goddess Demeter (rather than Leto) was the mother of the goddess Artemis.

Modern historians are understandably frustrated when they try to use Herodotus to discover "what really happened," or even what most of his contemporaries might have believed. He is a famously slippery historical source. What did the priests really tell him? What did he ask them? Did he even go to Egypt? Should we take Herodotus literally, or try instead to reconstruct, on the limited basis of what he tells us, what the purpose of his inquiry was, and what he meant his readers to learn about themselves? Perhaps all we can say with confidence is that he meant his audience (who probably heard rather than read what he wrote) to respect the "barbarians" and their customs, and not to regard them as culturally and morally inferior.

It appears to have been the similarities between certain Egyptian and Greek myths, and the impressions that they gave of the character of particular gods, that suggested to Herodotus that the Greek gods derived from the Egyptian. He does not speak about representations in the visual arts, nor does he discuss the architectural style of sacred buildings in the two countries. Certainly he does not consider the etymology of the gods' names, since he gives both their Egyptian and Greek names. His general practice is to call the gods of all cultures by Greek names, and to describe their cults in all foreign settings; thus he also discusses how the Phoenicians worshiped Heracles.

Herodotus also points out that the Egyptians were different from the Greeks in many respects: "Their habits and customs are different from those of the rest of humankind; their women go to market and conduct trade; their men sit at home and do the weaving." Egyptian men were circumcised. The Egyptians ate different food, and buried their dead and offered their sacrifices with different rituals, and wrote from right to left, and so on. At the end of the fifth century B.C. the Athenian dramatist Sophocles could offer his audience a similar account of the contrariness of Egyptian behavior. From the Greek point of view, in sum, Egypt was a strange and foreign culture.

IV.

The question of Greek origins has been broached again, and become a subject of passionate popular discussion, with the publication of the first two volumes of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization.* Unlike most of his Afrocentric admirers, Bernal can read hieroglyphics and Greek, and he knows other ancient languages; and though his field is political science, he seems at home in the chronological and geographical complexities of the ancient Mediterranean. Moreover, he appears to have reached Afrocentric conclusions about Greek origins independently of the Afrocentrists. "I had been studying these issues for eight years," he writes in his first volume, "before I became aware of this literature."

As Bernal's discussion, notes, and bibliography testify, he has read widely and thought strenuously about the Mediterranean as a whole, if not exactly with an open mind, at least without giving priority to the Greeks, as classically trained scholars tend to do. Still, his assessment of the evidence for the Egyptian contribution starts from the unproven premise that European scholars have distorted the evidence, documentary and archaeological. His first volume, subtitled "The Fabrication of Ancient Greece," is a kind of historiographical prelude to the subject, in which he attacks the nineteenth-century notion that the Greeks were Aryans from the north. Bernal proposes to return from the "Aryan Model" to the "Ancient Model," that is, to Herodotus's notion that the Greeks derived their religion and possibly other important customs from the east, and from Egypt in particular.

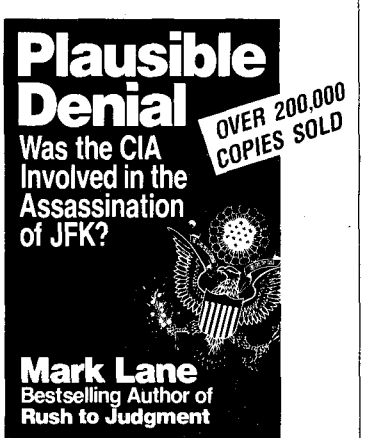
In his second volume, he concentrates on demonstrating the truth of his account—which he now calls the "Revised Ancient Model"—by assessing the ancient archaeological and documentary evidence for the origins of Greece. This volume surveys the varied information that can be gleaned from disparate and often fragmentary sources about the movements of Mediterranean peoples in the second millennium. It is difficult and exhausting to read, though not because Bernal fails to state his case clearly, or to arm the reader with maps, dates, a glossary, and excellent indices. (He does fail, however, to provide illustrations of the visual evidence—of art and architecture—not least as reminders of why these varied cultures may be thought to have had some influence on one another.) Unfortunately for Bernal, unfortunately for all of us, the second millennium B.C. has dealt us so far only a partial hand of cards. Occasionally new evidence is found, but we have little hope of ever recovering the complete deck. Bernal plays his cards with confidence, however, and with an exuberance that is more characteristic of the amateur than the professional; but they are, in the end, cards from the same old incomplete and incompleteable pack.

To speak of "fabrication," and thereby to suggest some conspiracy by European scholars who wished to promote the contribution of northern peoples like themselves, is to exaggerate wildly; but Bernal has ample justification for calling into question many widely accepted hypotheses, such as the traditional date of the Greeks' adaptation of the Phoenician syllabary into their own alphabet. (In *Cadmean Letters* he suggests that the Greek alphabet came into use much earlier, in the middle of the second millennium.) Bernal is right to point out, often amusingly, that scholars have often treated hypotheses as orthodoxies, and been incapable of giving proper weight to new and important data.

Bernal shows that Egypt and its culture were misrepresented or simply ignored by European writers. He argues that widely influential books, such as Flaubert's *Salammbô* (1862), promoted the notion that African cultures were more depraved and uncivilized than those of the Greeks or the Romans. He describes how Flaubert had originally meant to write a historical novel about Egypt but fixed on ancient Carthage as his subject because the Egyptians were not sufficiently depraved for his purposes. The Carthaginians, particularly because they sacrificed young children, provided him with an almost ideal opportunity to criticize non-Christian and non-European values, and to con-

National Best Seller

THE
FINAL WORD
ON THE
ASSASSINATION


Plausible Denial
OVER 200,000 COPIES SOLD
Was the CIA Involved in the Assassination of JFK?
Mark Lane
Bestselling Author of Rush to Judgment

JFK, the Movie, raises once again the question, "Who killed John F. Kennedy?" **Plausible Denial** provides the answer.

THUNDER'S MOUTH PRESS
Distributed by Publishers Group West

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

demn the Carthaginians' Phoenician background and culture (and by association Jewish culture as well).

Bernal regards Flaubert's description of Carthaginian life as a typical illustration of Eurocentric hypocrisy: "Flaubert implied that Europeans—with the possible exception of the English—were incapable of such things. In fact the Romans outdid the Carthaginians in virtually every luxury and outrage while the Macedonians [i.e., Greeks] were not far behind." Bernal proceeds to note a few specific examples of the cruelty shown by the Romans to some of their war victims and mentions some of the horrors of the treatment of colonial populations in Flaubert's own lifetime.

Many more examples of Greco-Roman (and European) atrocities might be mentioned. But surely there is something rather simple about these comparisons. Which civilization, ancient or modern, has not been guilty of unspeakable atrocity? And is Bernal being fair even to Flaubert? For in *Salammbô* Flaubert attempted, like Homer and the Greek tragic poets, to portray rather than to condemn or to expose. Bernal reads the novel as if it were a political pamphlet.

The problem for this critic of other historians and historical writers is that his own "Ancient Model" betrays considerable historiographical naïveté. Bernal relies too much on Herodotus's treatment of Egypt. And he painstakingly describes how Egyptian scientific notions were preserved in certain Christian legends and in Masonic ritual, claiming that "no one before 1600 seriously questioned either the belief that Greek civilization and philosophy derive from Egypt, or that the chief ways in which they had been transmitted were through Egyptian colonizations of Greece and later Greek study in Egypt." It is perfectly correct that nobody before 1600 questioned these historical propositions, but that is because nobody before 1600 (or thereabouts) made a scientific study of archaeology or linguistics. Bernal adduces historical superstition as if it were historical fact. He does not point out that these ancient and medieval beliefs about cultural relations in antiquity were based on the acceptance of mythology as history, and on taking Herodotus and ancient anecdotal biographers at their literal word.

Bernal cites Herodotus on the Egyptian origin of Greek religion and ritual, discussing the many rough but intriguing parallels that can be drawn between Egyptian and Greek myth and cult. Again, none of these seems in itself conclusive. Nor does Bernal show how the Greeks came to borrow their "philosophy" as well. He does not discuss the implications of Herodotus's very explicit statement that Egyptian habits and customs in his own time were totally different from those of the Greeks. He suggests that the Eleusinian mysteries were derived from Egyptian rites, but he does not point out that such a claim can be neither proved nor disproved: ancient mysteries were (as their name suggests) kept secret, and no one now knows much about them.

Moreover, Bernal seems somewhat reluctant to investigate all possible explanations of the parallels he points out. The Greeks, for example, devised an elaborate irrigation system in Boeotia (the region in which Thebes was the principal town). Where did they learn to control water? The matter puts Bernal in mind of the Nile. But how much weight should be given to the fact that in Greek myth the hero Heracles is depicted as controlling large bodies of water? And do references to the hero's control of water necessarily suggest that Heracles originated in Egypt? The Nile is perhaps the most famous body of water in the Mediterranean world that causes problems, but it is hardly the only one. The behavior of the Euphrates has hardly been without consequence. Such correspondences, then, are not exact parallels. At most they suggest only influences.

Bernal supports much of his discussion of the "Ancient Model" etymologically—with etymologies of Greek names such as Danaus, Aegyptus, and Io. It is worth noting that look-alike etymologies also feature in other Afrocentric discussions of the African origins of European societies: John G. Jackson, for example, in his *Introduction to African Civilization*, lists a few examples of Egypto-English words, such as cow/kaui, without noting that there are also other more plausible etymologies. (The word "cow" is Indo-European, cognate to Greek *bous* and Latin *bos*.)

Bernal is more sophisticated, his etymologies more systematic and scientific. But the results of his research still cannot be taken as positive proof of an Egyptian presence in Greece. Among his more plausible etymologies is his derivation of the name of the city of Athens from the Egyptian Ht Nt (vocalized), house of Neit, or Athena. This derivation would provide a striking confirmation of Herodotus's claim, better than any that Herodotus himself was prepared to offer, since the Greeks had only the most rudimentary "sound-alike" understanding of the history of words. But such an etymology cannot confirm that the Greeks borrowed anything large or important from the Egyptians. For place names and proper names, and occasionally even ordinary nouns, easily make their way into foreign cultures as loanwords. That is to say, they reveal patterns of influence and little else. A linguistic proof of origins requires more than a similarity in names and nouns. The derivation of one culture from another is almost invariably reflected in other aspects of the language, such as its grammar and its working vocabulary—which is why we would have discovered that French-speaking peoples occupied the island of Britain after the eleventh century A.D., even if we did not know it from history.

Bernal's account of the origins of Greek knowledge is presented in an equally unsatisfactory way. He does not point out at the beginning of his discussion, although it would be reasonable to expect him to do so, that the Hermetic corpus that preserves many of the details of Egyptian wisdom is not at all as ancient as it claims to be, but rather was compiled by a Greek writing in the fourth century A.D. (This was one of the earliest and the most important discoveries of modern critical history.) That is, he refrains from stating explicitly that what the authors of Masonic ritual and other Europeans considered to be "Egyptian" knowledge was in fact reported by Greeks. Certainly elements of ancient Egyptian religion were retained, but within a Neo-Platonic framework. What Bernal represents as Egyptian is essentially Greco-Egyptian.

There remains the question of how such influences might have been transmitted; and here, too, Bernal is on less than solid ground, again relying heavily on Herodotus. Herodotus talks about invasions by an Egyptian king whom he calls Sesostris, whose armies penetrated as far north as the Black Sea and conquered the Scythians and the Thracians. This Sesostris, Bernal believes, should be identified with the twelfth-dynasty pharaoh Senwosre I (1959-14 B.C.), although this involves some rearrangement of generally accepted chronology. And the myth of Danaus could be understood to suggest that influences were transmitted later in the millennium by immigration, invasion, or even a peaceful takeover.

On the infirm basis of this myth, Bernal seems to assume that Egyptians or some bearers of their culture occupied the Greek mainland during the second millennium B.C.. The Hyksos, who invaded Egypt during the same period, are the logical candidate for this role. In order to let them play it, however, Bernal argues that they came to Greece two centuries earlier than the ancients thought they did, and insists that they managed to transmit, along with elements of their own Semitic language and culture,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

aspects of Egyptian culture as well. It does not trouble him that Herodotus fails to state that Sesostris's armies conquered or even penetrated mainland Greece.

And the Hyksos invasion, even if it happened as Bernal supposes, is very different in character from the Egyptian cultural domination described by Diop, or from James's notion of the wholesale plundering of Egyptian ideas by Greeks in the first millennium B.C. It is both more gradual and more passive: it allows for two-way exchange, Egyptian and Semitic influence on Greece and Greek influence on Egypt and the eastern Mediterranean. That is, it suggests that cultures and words can be transmitted peacefully, by trade or by physical coexistence. A useful analogy may be found in the conquest of Greece by Rome in the second century B.C.: it was the culture of the conquered that dominated the culture of the conquerors.

This issue has an important implication. For it seems that Bernal, as he leaves the world of nineteenth-century speculation and confronts the new evidence brought to bear on the problem by the archaeological and linguistic discoveries of the twentieth century, edges ever closer to precisely the complex multicultural "model" of Greek origins championed by most modern classical scholars. Indeed, Bernal himself now admits, "with some surprise and distress," that the "Aryan Model" may in some respects be valid.

V.

Bernal is right to insist that all scholars, and particularly archaeologists and anyone who seeks to understand incomplete and fragmentary data, must start from assumptions of some sort. But why test only the Aryan and the African assumptions, when others are also tenable? Why not a "Semitic Model" or a "Hebrew Model" or a "Mesopotamian Model"? In both the Greek and the Hebrew accounts, heaven and earth are created from a formless void and then separated, man's behavior becomes offensive, so that he is compelled to lead a hard life, and the human race is almost destroyed by a flood. And why not a "Hittite Model"? In both Hittite myth and Greek myth there is strife among the generations of gods, and fathers are violently overthrown by sons. And why not a "Multicultural Model," to take account of the various elements that seem to have been incorporated into Greek mythology and culture?

Bernal has forcefully reminded us of what may have been the principal reason that contact with Egypt was essential for the Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples, including, in the second half of the first millennium, the Romans: Egypt was an abundant source of grain. In this way, and with the data that he has assembled, he may have sharpened the quality of the debate about the origins of Greek culture. But I do not think that he has brought about any dramatic change in the way that the evidence about Greek origins should be interpreted. The slim and difficult evidence shows, at most, the ways in which elements of foreign cultures could have been transmitted, whether by trade or by conquest; but it does not establish that the Greeks stole anything, or that they were not people who came from the north, speaking an Indo-European language, whose culture was influenced over many centuries by their neighbors, through invasion, trade, and importation. The basic picture remains unchanged.

Nobody would deny that the Egyptians had a notable influence on Greek religion and art. On the basis of the most scrupulous scholarly evaluation of the present evidence, however, nobody should claim that the Greeks stole their best or their most significant ideas from the Egyptians, or from anyone else. Certainly, and fortunately, they did not copy their system of government from the Egyptians. We need only to look at the remains of public buildings. The pharaohs built the pyramids for themselves, mainly with slave labor. The Athenians voted to build the Parthenon for the use of all the citizens.

To the extent that Bernal has helped to provide an apparently respectable underpinning for Afrocentric fantasies, he must be held culpable, even if his intentions are honorable and his motives are sincere. His intellectual standards are higher than most of his fellow Afrocentrists (and much, much higher than the "standards" of "scholars" like Leonard Jeffries), but not even he has dealt with the racial issue squarely. One hopes that in his forthcoming volumes he will finally assess how much of the Afroasiatic legacy to the Greeks involved *black* Africans or, as the Greeks called them, "Ethiopians." So far Bernal has simply ducked the issue. Or rather, he has tried to have it both ways, allowing the Egyptians to stand for the rest of Africa, whatever their racial type or types. In a colloquium about *Black Athena* at the American Philological Association in 1989, he admitted that he would have preferred to have called the book *African Athena*, but his publisher insisted on its present title because the combination of blacks and women would "sell." It is a feeble excuse and a damaging admission.

Bernal would prefer to emphasize that Egypt is a part of Africa rather than try to determine the exact proportion of darker-skinned central Africans in the population. For to speak of the ancient (or modern) Egyptians as "black" is misleading in the extreme. Not that it would have mattered from the Greek point of view, since the Greeks classified people by nationality rather than skin color, as Frank Snowden pointed out twenty years ago. But Herodotus, the earliest Greek source, refers just once to the skin color of the Egyptians, and then only to prove that the Egyptians under Sesostris managed to penetrate as far as the northeast end of the Black Sea; he says that the Colchians, the people who lived there, could be classified as Egyptians both because they had dark skin and woolly hair and spoke the same language, practiced circumcision, and worked their linen in the unique Egyptian manner. Bernal takes this passage as evidence that the Egyptians were "black" in the modern sense of Negroid. But if that had been what Herodotus meant, he would

The Storyline

is eventful and dreadful, a narrative
Of everyone alive who now is not.
One after another, I knew them all,
I heard those metal drawers clank shut.

The heart's a deadbolt locking in and out.
It catches every time the dying starts.
The chest expands around it, a furnace
Surging and flaring with what, with guilt?

Of course, of course, it's natural,
Near the end of the plot, to number
And shun the dead. After the flicker
Of lament, after the traces of paradise

In their silver urns, after their spirits
Hover near enough to chime *not yet, not yet, now,*
You'd think it's nothing to take their hands.
You'd think, with either fear or praise,

You'd know the single way to enter
Such cold water: lastborn of the family, only
Surviving son, one death in front of another,
Step into this undertow, without risk.

STEVEN CRAMER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

have referred to them as Ethiopians, whom he regarded as blacker and more woolly haired than any other people and who spoke a different language from the Egyptians, and had different customs.

Will believers in the Athenian conspiracy be persuaded by these and other historical arguments? Perhaps some, like my student, will realize that Elizabeth Taylor's skin color was not the most unhistorical aspect of *Cleopatra*. But many others will continue to believe that the Greeks stole African culture or Egyptian culture, without wishing to inquire what exactly they mean by African culture or Egyptian culture (or Greek culture). For historical truth is not what they seek. They seek, instead, a kind of religious truth, an uplifting sacred history of their own.

When Marcus Garvey first spoke about the Greeks stealing from the Africans, he was not creating a new historiography, he was creating a new mythology. The reasons are not far to seek. For black Americans (many of whom now, indeed, wish to be known as African Americans), the African origin of Greece is a myth of self-identification and self-ennoblement, the kind of "noble lie" that Socrates suggests is needed for the utopian state he describes in Plato's *Republic*. Surely it is the Afrocentric view that is, to use Bernal's term, the fabrication; but such fabrications may build confidence, and encourage marginalized groups to quit the margins and participate in the common culture. In that sense, they may be useful and even "noble."

But hope is not enough of a reason for illusion. What constructive purpose will the myth of African origins really serve? If it causes us to subvert or even to ignore the truth about the past, it damages our ability, the ability of all of us, black and white, to judge fairly and accurately, which is the best purpose of education. And even if it helps black people to gain confidence, it will teach them, and any other people who believe the myth, that facts can be manufactured or misreported to serve a political purpose; that origins are the only measure of value; that difference is either a glory or a danger, when in fact it is a common, challenging fact of life; that the true knowledge of customs, language, and literature is unimportant for understanding the nature of a culture.

The Greeks, of all peoples, deserve least the fate to which the Afrocentrists have subjected them. The great historian Arnaldo Momigliano observed that

> what I think is typically Greek is the critical attitude toward the recording of events, that is, the development of critical methods enabling us to distinguish between facts and fancies. To the best of my knowledge no historiography earlier than the Greek or independent of it developed these critical methods; and we have inherited the Greek methods.

Momigliano was not a Greek. He was an Italian Jew, and a refugee from one of the most terrible political myths of all time, the not very noble lie of Jewish inferiority that provided the justification for the Holocaust. But the rational legacy of Greece belonged to him, too—exactly as it belongs to people of African descent, whatever their skin color or their exact place of origin. Like everyone in the European diaspora, and like everyone in the American melting pot, they should take pride in the Egyptians, in the Phoenicians, and in the Greeks, and give them each their due for their actual achievements, as well as for their contributions to other civilizations. For all these civilizations, like everything else in the past, belong equally to all of us. •

What, Me Worry?

By Luc Sante

The World of Charles Addams
introduction by Wilfrid Sheed
(Knopf, 305 pp., $30)

Completely Mad
A History of the Comic Book and Magazine
by Maria Reidelbach
(Little, Brown, 208 pp., $39.95)

Poe's narrator, savoring his first horrible impression of the Usher family manse—its "bleak walls," its "vacant eye-like windows," its "white trunks of decayed trees"—experiences "an insufferable gloom ... an iciness, a sinking, a sickening of the heart—an unredeemed dreariness of thought which no goading of the imagination could torture into aught of the sublime." Trying to shift his viewpoint, he looks at its upside-down reflection in a puddle, but it is just as bad. Is it a measure of Poe's gifts that the reader can get this far without laughing, or of Charles Addams's gifts that he did not have to change anything to make it funny? Well, actually, Addams would have added a mailbox and maybe a couple of milk bottles on the porch.

The gothic, with its lurid excess, is only a hair's breadth away from the ridiculous, and it frequently crosses the line, as can be demonstrated by a little too much of Mrs. Radcliffe or an umpteenth viewing of *The Cat and the Canary*. Even Poe, who brought unmatched conviction and real poetry to the genre, as well as potent visceral stimuli, is not altogether immune. All Addams had to do was add the rituals and the impedimenta of twentieth-century suburban life. That is not, of course, all he did; he also brought a firm line, a love of detail, and a genuine and enduring sweetness that distinguished his brand of macabre humor from the not so latent sadism inherent in that of, say, Saki or Ambrose Bierce.

He found his natural home in *The New Yorker* of the Harold Ross era, a place where the extremes of life might be domesticated without being declawed. Ross's insistence on accessibility in both writing and drawing created a neighborly tone, which Addams extended to the netherworld and the occult. Like his contemporaries, Addams was filled with wonder at the twentieth-century United States, where modern inventions and merchandising methods multiply daily, but he was skeptical all the same. His modern world is a place where witches can purchase instant brew ("just add water"), morticians give Green Stamps, and the gingerbread house in the forest carries an ingredient panel that lists glucose, dextrose, and dry skimmed milk. Even hell has an express lane.

Like all cartoonists, Addams dealt in commonplaces: those of middle-class behavior on the one hand, and, on the other, those concerning witch doctors, fakirs, mad bombers, mad scientists, torture chambers, extraterrestrials, werewolves, metamorphoses, desert islands, murders, suicides, the Cyclops, the Flying Dutchman, the Missing Link. The latter are bound by the strictures of the former. Tact and courtesy, or at least resignation and routine, prevail over chaos. Ad-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dams's work is a reminder that not only are the trappings of horror close to humor, but humor is also a neighbor to horror. Both are potentially unhinging, and must be checked by the little rituals of daily life. (A recent letter to Dear Abby struck a particularly Addams-like note in telling of a prospective suicide who decided to delay her departure time until six o'clock, because the procedure involved drinking liquor and she had never imbibed before the cocktail hour.)

Addams's best-known invention, of course, was the family that came to bear his name. In the present collection the first cartoon to feature them dates from 1938, and although the wife subsequently let down her chignon and the husband shaved off his beard, most of the principal features were in place. In that first panel they are enduring a vacuum-cleaner demonstration, while all around are cobwebs and a bat flies up the stairs. The effect is oddly bohemian for the time. In fact, as a gothic-horror family adapting unself-consciously to suburban life while retaining their gothic-horror heritage, they seem not unlike the nice people next door who happen to be nudists or Druids or fruitarians. If, by the 1950s, the sociology was ready to fall into place (the black clothes, the crumbling Victorian), by the '60s it was a ready-made situation comedy. During that era it seemed as though all of history and literature was destined to be restaged in the standard living-room set with the couch in the middle and the staircase in the rear. Here was a premise that merely required cobwebs.

For the purposes of television, all that needed to be added were names for the characters, and the results were perfect: Gomez, Morticia, Lurch, Wednesday. Only poor Pugsley was stuck with a name that sounded mechanically humorous, but it seems the network took exception to Addams's choice, which was Pubert. Of course, the other requirement was that each episode be supplied with a plot, some sort of typical problem like a parking ticket or a report card that could be resolved in half an hour. Nobody was really supposed to notice these plots, which were just a necessary irritant meant to rub against the premise and spark off jokes.

The makers of the current $30 million cinematic production were faced with the same dilemma writ large. A single-panel cartoon, after all, is a glimpse, and its structure may be translated uneasily but not disastrously to the sitcom episode, which is essentially a vaudeville sketch with a lot of air pumped in. To further adapt it to motion-picture dynamics, however, is quite another matter. In fact, the movie is not a disaster, although all the potential for one is present. Where other large-scale adaptations of older TV series—which seem positively rustic, almost folk art to present-day eyes—choke from the toxic effects of too much money, *The Addams Family* manages to retain a certain lightness of tone. This is in part due to the acting: Anjelica Huston in particular is hypnotic, bringing to Morticia a vampish carnality, and little Christina Ricci is almost literally uncanny as Wednesday, while the others are all at least respectable.

Also present is an old-fashioned hokeyness that stems directly from the premise: since the occult and the supernatural are the given, all comic effect must derive from the mundane. As a result, the slickness is mostly kept from calling attention to itself. The most notable special effect is Thing, the severed hand that in the television series was confined to a box. Here it is permitted to run around by means of traveling mattes, but attention is diverted from the gee-whiz angle by the ability of Christopher Hart, the actor whose hand plays the role, to invest it with the spirit of a family dog who skitters on parquets and hops constantly with nervous eagerness. There remains the problem of the plot, which even the director has acknowledged is not very good. But no plot could have been. In nine out of ten Hollywood movies today, the story seems like an afterthought; and *The Addams Family* might be an argument for no longer even pretending to have a story. But would a $30 million series of blackout skits be commercially feasible?

Thirty-five years ago or so, the work of Charles Addams might have been seen as a forerunner of "sick humor," a nearly forgotten category in which was lumped every then-current affront to good taste, from dead-baby jokes to Lenny Bruce. In the allegedly pent-up 1950s, the disgusting was tonic. It was a time when legislators with nothing better to do were trying to regulate the contents of comic books, to the point of mandating facials for cartoon witches. (There were to be no more unsightly warts.) Among the most egregious offenders of juvenile-pulp standards was a firm called E.C., whose initials laughably stood for Educational Comics.

It published such titles as *Vault of Horror* and *Tales from the Crypt,* whose pages virtually oozed noxious fluids and decomposing flesh. It was run by William Gaines, whose father in 1934 had invented the comic book as we have come to know it, and who so named his company because he actually intended its products to be edifying. After the father's death, the son transformed the struggling business into a financial success and a cultural institution through daring and a superior intuition for what adolescents actually wanted. The subversive bent of the imprint was already inclining toward conscious and knowing self-parody, so it came as a natural development that, in 1952, Gaines's associate Harvey Kurtzman initiated a satirical title, *Mad.*

In 1954, after Gaines and other comic-book publishers had been dragged before Senate judiciary hearings, the Comics Code Authority was established, which regulated the industry so tightly as to threaten to put them all out of business. E.C. did, in fact, fold its line under pressure. The books almost immediately became collectors' items, and then a major influence on succeeding generations, most prominently in the work of Stephen King. *Mad* alone was spared, because Gaines and Company had had the foresight to turn it after a few issues into a slick magazine, which put it outside

BOOK WANTED

Laughter of Aphrodite by Peter Green, U.S. edition (Doubleday), in good/ excellent condition. $100 per copy. Call (510) 642-8430.

INDEPENDENT TELEVISION SERVICE (ITVS) IS SEEKING PROPOSALS for film and video projects intended for broadcast on public television. ITVS funds independent producers to create programs of all genres. Open Call deadline: March 16, 1992. For Guidelines: ITVS, P.O. Box 75455, St. Paul, MN 55175. (612) 225-9035.

WORLD'S LARGEST CD CATALOG

Bose Express Music Catalog is like having an enormous record store all to yourself. You can shop for the music you want, when you want it. We carry everything in print in Classical, Opera, Jazz and Rock...You'll find everything from Basie to Bach, Dylan to U2 in our 240-page catalog.

ALMOST FREE CD

Subscribers may choose to receive a **FREE** Erato CD Sampler. This 67 minute CD features works by Mozart, Beethoven, Grieg, Strauss, Mahler, Debussy and more. Reg. Price: $14.99 + S&H. **New subscribers pay only the $3.95 S&H Charge.** (6449)

Send $6.00 (refundable on your first order from the catalog) for our 50,000 title catalog. New subscribers get 1 **FREE** year of update catalogs covering new releases, recommendations, reviews and music specials. Absolutely no obligation or unrequested shipments.

BOSE
Express Music

Call 1-800-451-BOSE (2673)
or send to
Bose Express Music
The Mountain, Framingham, MA 01701 NR02

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the jurisdiction of the Code.

Forty years after its start, *Mad* magazine is still run by Gaines, although it is now owned by Time-Warner. It still accepts no advertising, nor does it advertise itself; and it hews to a tone established at its very beginnings. This might be described as an introduction to satire for children, one that walks a narrow path between excess and restraint, obviousness and subtlety, the particular and the general, the harsh and the soft. It has been phenomenally consistent in maintaining its balance, at keeping its credibility with its audience, at neither condescending to its readers nor flying over their heads. The age of its average readership is probably around 12 (they've always refused to do a survey), at which time kids are a volatile mix of sophistication and naïveté, and are experts at detecting bad faith.

For the adult reader, however, the experience is a divided one. There prevails a tone of preadolescent humidity, as exemplified by the fixation on vomiting, and by an editorial desire to banner the magazine's disgusting qualities (*bleccchh!*), which in reality are few. The satire often appears soft because of its determined non-partisanship (though there have been exceptions to this rule, particularly during the Vietnam era); and so do the parodies, because adults are used to approaching parody as a game for connoisseurs. The effects seem broad, and there are few quotable lines. On the other hand, the visual parodies are often remarkably exact (the Breck shampoo ad reconceived to feature Ringo Starr as a model for "Beautiful Hair Blecch" is a classic); and the anti-establishment line, if not especially pointed, is at least consistent.

Chief among *Mad*'s virtues is its role as a school for skepticism. The magazine is at its best when it engages in free-floating anarchic humor, and over the years it has succeeded in attracting a number of singular talents. Antonio Prohías's "Spy vs. Spy," with its two abstracted wraiths, one cloaked and hatted in black and the other in white, each forever hatching symmetrical plots to eliminate the other, parodied the cold war in an eerily elemental style that is very close to Dada. Don Martin's elongated rubberlike figures and disturbing deadpan humor are utterly inimitable and hard to forget. And then there are such items as Phil Hahn and Paul Coker's "Horrifying Clichés," which literalize verbal formulas such as "Exploding a Myth" and "Striking a Careless Pose," with the noun end of the phrase inevitably represented as a large, scale-covered beast; and there is foolery like the maniacally intricate rules of a sport called 43-Man Squamish, which is played on a five-sided field called a Flutney, and involves flippers and shepherd's crooks.

Maria Reidelbach's *Completely Mad*, a history and anthology of the magazine, is a middling sort of book, not bad but not as good as it might have been. This is in part the result of its task as an anthology: to be representative of forty years' worth of contents involved favoring a broad sampling over a selection of the most acute works, and a page or two at most of the extended pieces was all that could apparently be managed. The text suffers, meanwhile, from trying to place the magazine in a broad historical context, which is achieved by a recitation of the sort of potted social history that toddlers must know by heart (the '50s were repressed, the '60s protested and swung). This superficiality is contrasted with altogether too much information about the inner life of the staff, though the book is illuminating on the administration's idiosyncratic practices, especially in the realm of cheeseparing—the magazine, which has a circulation of over 1 million and has gone as high as 2.4, typically pays contributors between $350 and $650 a page for all rights, forever.

The most fascinating part of Reidelbach's book is the chapter devoted to the magazine's mascot, the eternally equivocal Alfred E. Neuman, now a nearly universal symbol of contented idiocy. The face turns out to have a long history. (The name's history is shorter, being derived from a radio joke by Henry Morgan at the expense of the composer Alfred Newman.) Its lineage stretches back to gag postcards from the '30s, ads from the '20s, dentists' signs and handbills from the '00s. The oldest verified image dates from 1895, and a circa-1900 rendition by Frederick Burr Opper, who created Happy Hooligan, already possesses all the features of the current model: the gap-toothed grin, the jug ears, the string tie, the cowlick, and one eye that is higher than the other.

Over the years since the face has been copyrighted, real models have been cited, but each time an older version has been found. The character has been identified as a Jewish caricature (which would be uncharacteristic for a magazine that has probably done more to infiltrate Yiddish expressions into the American language than any institution since vaudeville), but the earliest examples appear to have no ethnic context. Nobody has ever succeeded in finding the ur-Alfred E. from which all subsequent models spring, and his progress through the fringe of popular culture appears almost spectral in its invisibility and seeming randomness.

Alfred E. Neuman's slogan—What, Me Worry?—has been disseminated as far and wide as his features. It is not without a valuable point. Since only a moron could fail to be anxious, anxiety must be a proof of intelligence, with the corollary that imbecility might be preferable. In *Mad*, Alfred functions as the jester's cap that permits the wearer to say anything without fear of reprisal. His underground history, however, suggests that the moron has a will of his own. He is the face that America fears it will see in the mirror, or, worse, on the front of the dollar bill.

LUC SANTE is the author of *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

Unsentimental Education

BY RICHARD HOWARD

By With To & From: A Lincoln Kirstein Reader edited by Nicholas Jenkins

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 423 pp., $30)

Splendors first, though they are achieved late in the career represented by this anthology of fifty years' writing: the autobiographical essay "Boston: Frames & Outlines" (written in the mid-'80s and first published here); the literary memoir that becomes a reverie on themes of erotic displacement, "Carlsen, Crane" (published in 1982, when Kirstein was 75); and the memorial study of Mrs. Henry Adams (published in 1989). I believe these three texts to be the finest American discursive prose of their decade. They are certainly the culminating accomplishment of a man hidden in the limelight, who in the course of his "moralistic, hotheaded" pursuits (the adjectives are his editor's, though I shall pre-empt them shortly) has never made much of himself as that indispensable subjugator of our attentions, an author.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Here, for example, is what he said in 1975 of his only novel, *Flesh Is Heir*, which appeared in 1932:

> I could not invent three-dimensional characters in any satisfactory depth. I was more interested in the problem of form than in the particulars of personality. I had a predisposition to impose a factitious order where there was little apparent evidence.... I knew that novels should have a structural schedule, and I hoped to build for myself a scaffold, which today must only seem rude, naive, and pretentious.

This self-criticism, arrogant in its quite irrelevant fictional demolitions, is nonetheless of great interest as an accounting for Kirstein's obsession with classical dance: "For me the ultimate effect of craft was the immediate suggestion of form in space."

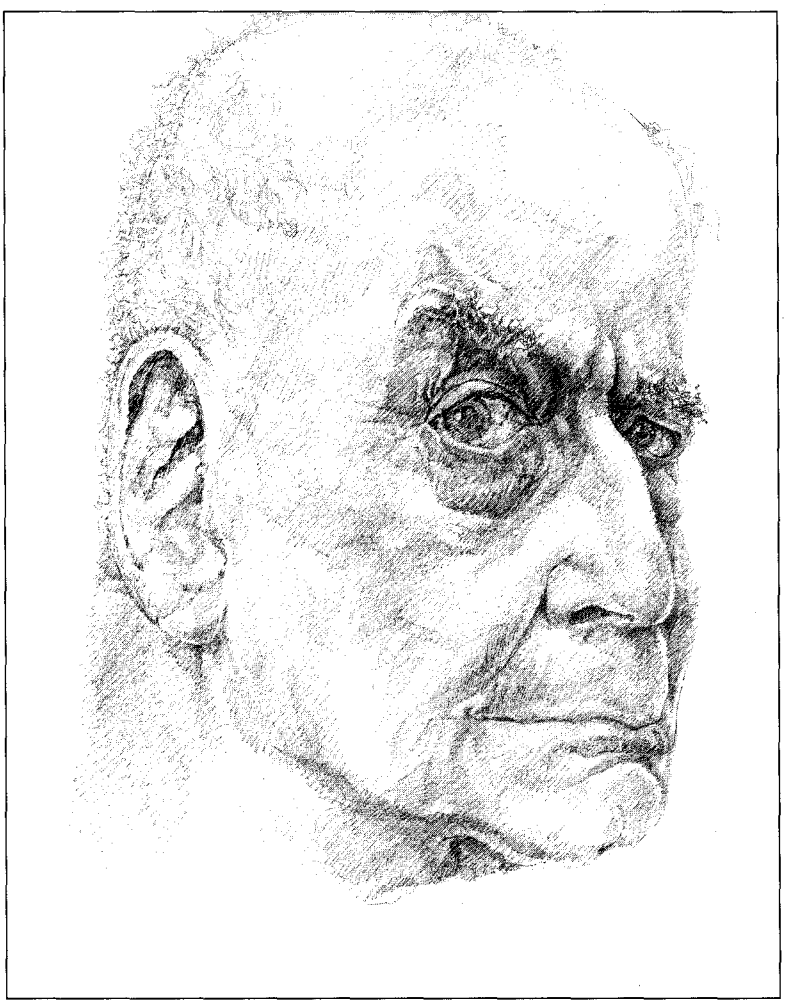
And after reporting that a second "narrative," published by the Hogarth Press and "liked" by E. M. Forster, was destroyed by German bombs in a warehouse almost at publication, Kirstein manages to spirit away the poetry of his third "creative" effort by declaring that the work that he wrote "in verse, concerning much of what I found in the army during the Hitler war, was rooted in history and might have been illustrated by photographs." This last was *Rhymes of a Pfc*, initially published by Kirstein himself. Or at least paid for: the paragraph in Auden's review that says so was cut from the text reprinted in the 1987 *Poems of Lincoln Kirstein*; after chastising the literary establishment's failure to recognize the poet in the impresario, Auden ended his review thus: "As a picture of the late war, [it] is by far the most convincing, moving, and impressive book I have come across." (The verses were reissued and enlarged in 1966 and 1981.)

By the time Kirstein had become an acknowledged enabling figure of his culture, having received the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Benjamin Franklin Medal of the Royal Society, and the rank of Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, as well as a stream of degrees and honorary memberships, Atheneum reprinted the *Rhymes* along with another hundred pages of verse (*Poems of a Patriot*), and the poet's by now characteristic disclaimer:

> I never aimed "to be a poet." I liked to write verse....Whatever counts for "sensibility," or sensitivity to personal emotion, did notoccupy me. I was attached to history in passage and as I passed through it. Failing as dramatist or screen-writer, light verse served instead, with its game enhanced by rhythm, rhyme and metric.

The dangling modifier of the last sentence is characteristic too, eliding the "I" who is said to have failed. And how revealing is the poet's insistence on not being "occupied" by "sensitivity to personal emotion." Even at the time, I guessed otherwise. Reviewing the *Rhymes* in 1964, I found the verse not so mechanically apt as Kirstein claimed, but more indicative of feeling than its merely historical engagement: "By his crabbed but knowledgeable music, rescuing his text from prose in the nick of rhyme, Kirstein has managed to make his war, as Miss Moore defined it, an 'inward' one indeed."

He was not to be a novelist, then, or a poet. If he was to be a writer at all, Kirstein had envisioned the role otherwise. In 1930, when he was 23, he wrote his first big piece on dance in *Hound & Horn*, the instigating quarterly that he founded and edited from 1927 to 1934, in which he announced that "the world needs a new Diaghilev to reintegrate the arts, but to save dancing in particular from a facile oblivion." As we know, he became what he called for. He became what he beheld—as Blake says—in the work and vision of George Balanchine, whom he describes in a diary of 1933: "B seemed intense, concentrated, disinterested; not desperate exactly, but without any hope. I like to imagine we got on well." (On the evidence of this diary—called "an early diary" here, which I hope implies that there are later ones—Kirstein is as rewarding a master of the form as Wilder, Wescott, and Cheever.)



LINCOLN KIRSTEIN BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Whether they did or did not get on well, since 1935 Kirstein has created five dance companies *for* Balanchine (to use the one preposition that does not appear in the title of this reader), and he remained in charge of the last, the New York City Ballet, until 1989. Kirstein's recognition of Balanchine's quality, formulated as early as 1952, remains singularly accurate: "Balanchine's unmistakable signature is in his masterful designs for tenderness, regret of loss, mystery, exuberance, and human consideration." Kirstein published many excellent texts on ballet and dance, pedagogic, delineative, and historical, from the knowledgeable pinnacle of his impresario's perspective during all the years he exercised this most arduous of professions. I count some dozen studies of classical dancing in particular, including the authoritative monograph on Nijinsky, the thirty-year chronicle of the adventures of the New York City Ballet, and the superb tribute to the late choreographer reprinted here from *Portrait of Mr. B.*

Generating these works, which were the illustrative byproducts of his management of the company, Kirstein made himself, along with Edwin Denby, Stark Young, and Virgil Thomson, one of the best critics of the performance arts that America has had. But I suspect that none

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the writing he did while he was general director, remarkable as so much of it is (and I miss, for all the range of Nicholas Jenkins's handsomely edited selection, the lyric essay on portraits of Lincoln, for whom Kirstein was named, and the monographs on Nadelman and Tchelitchew), concerned Kirstein so much as that executive labor itself. After all, it had been as early as his Harvard years that he learned from "John Wheelwright, my strongest mentor, that life was not a career but a service."

Indeed, since the first night of *Orpheus* in April 1948, I don't remember attending any performance of the New York City Ballet for forty years without glimpsing that tall, choleric figure somewhere in the house. And at the great Stravinsky festival of June 1972 (which presented twenty-two dance works to music by the composer, who had died the year before), I observed something of how fanatical such service could be. After the final performance, Kirstein came out in front of the curtain to make an announcement, and before he could speak a grateful audience burst into minutes of a thunderous ovation. To him, this was intolerable. The "public" was irrelevant; he himself was no performer (any more than a poet or novelist), and he had no use for applause; besides, his immediate purpose was being frustrated by all this racket. And so he made a gesture of petulant impatience toward the house that was murderous in its ferocity. We quieted down pretty fast after that, and Kirstein said, very gently, looking up to Mrs. Stravinsky's box, "Vera, I hope you are a little less lonely tonight." So much for insensitivity to personal emotion, on the part of this moralistic, hotheaded master.

After Balanchine's death in 1983, Kirstein appears to have concentrated his powers, for the first time, into his own writing. And just as he remarked that "it was the ghost of Henry Adams that presided over *Hound & Horn*," he resumed that spirit-writing in his intimate memorial reveries (typically played down as "personal asides") as well as in his grander historical fantasia on Clover and Henry Adams ("I felt and feel I am a man of the 19th century"). Adams's tone and temper haunt all these ultimate pieces on which Kirstein seems to have focused his unmixed attention, for strewn throughout this anthology of authoritative investigations into dance, photography, painting, film, literature, theater, and history are the fragments of an unacknowledged giant art.

Only posthumously, I suspect, shall we have *The Education of Lincoln Kirstein*, which is so audibly extended toward us in this chrestomathy and in other, often privately printed works, and then tweaked away in a gesture of characteristic disdain for mere readers. Yes, very much like Adams in the bewildering mélange of candor ("I was not wildly successful as a male impersonator") and reticence ("Eliot then governed the lending library I fancied as my mind"); of shared humanity (on Marilyn Monroe: "The death of someone who has given you intense pleasure, even if you never met, amounts almost to the death of a personal friend") and contemptuous dismissal ("the amateur's boastful proposing of an alternate language that its self delimits, a personal idiom legible for no longer than its investor's existence").

There is a double strain within the music of American autobiography. On the one hand, there is a tradition of associative amenity from Henry James and Santayana to Dahlberg and Stein right down to James Merrill's *A Different Person*; and on the other, a line of insolence from Henry Adams to Pound and Kirstein right down to Ben Sonnenberg's *Lost Property*. If I do not find more than fragments of Kirstein's magnum opus, as I imagine it to be, inspissated throughout this brilliant book—in which Jenkins has managed to coax his "subject" into a pretty fair representation of the emblematic personal history I believe Kirstein intends to create, if not to give us—there is, as Yeats said, great good in what we have, the rattle of pebbles under the receding wave. It is part of the "insolent" lineage not to bestow the private creation upon the public. Meanwhile, of course, Kirstein's pebbles are the stones with which glories are built. •

Does this Japanese model outperform famous European luxury pens?

Fujiyama Ceramic Pen

only $39.95* **But read this ad for an even better deal!*

If you've ever had occasion to write with one of the famous European pens, you know what marvelous products they are. Writing with them is a joy. It is almost effortless. The pen appears to float across the paper—even your thoughts seem to flow more freely. The substantial drawback, however, as with so many other nice things, is that the price of these luxury pens is awfully high. It's easy to spend $150 or more on one of them. Our Japanese friends have created their own version of these luxury pens. They are equally pleasing and quite similar in appearance, heft and feel. They have the same hi-lacquer finish, the same fine gold-tone accents and the same gold-plated clip as the famous European luxury pens. The exclusive ceramic writing tip provides silk-smooth, effortless writing. It will never flatten, stall or skip, even after hardest and longest use.

•The great reservoir of the Fujiyama Ceramic Pen holds enough ink to draw a line 6.3 miles long. That is enough to write a medium-size novel. But just in case your literary requirements go beyond that, we include not just one but two extra tips with two extra ink refills.

The most remarkable thing about the *Fujiyama Ceramic Pen* is its price. We are the exclusive distributors and are therefore able to offer it to you for just $39.95. But, we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $79.90, and we'll send you a third one—absolutely FREE!*** Write smoothly and easily, give character and style to your writing. Get your *Fujiyama Ceramic Pen(s)* today!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 882-3050
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Please give order **Code #4800B195.** If you prefer, mail check or card authorization and expiration. We need daytime phone # for all orders and issuing bank for charge orders. Add shipping/insurance: $3.50 for one; $10.50 for three. Add sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day return and one-year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

Looking for a bargain? Come in and visit our Catalog Outlet in San Francisco.

since 1967 haverhills of San Francisco

139 Townsend Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 5*

5 percent. Five states make it illegal to write in the name of *any* candidate for *any* office. Although the Virginia constitution guarantees the right to write-in votes, the state board of elections refuses to allow write-ins for president.

RICHARD E. SINCERE JR.
Arlington, Virginia

The writer is chairman of the Libertarian Party of Virginia.

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

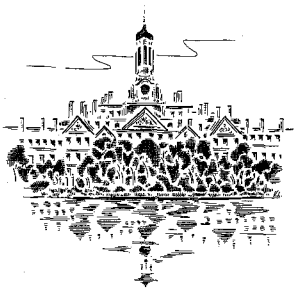
CAMBRIDGE DIARIST

Game theory

WHEN I ARRIVED IN CAMBRIDGE more years ago than I care to remember this was a white shoe town, and it remained so past the age of Camelot. Over a tenth of Harvard freshmen had "prepped" at Exeter and Andover. The first section I taught as a graduate student was made up largely of George Bush look-alikes. When one speaks today of Harvard students, one means both women and men, and a walk through the Yard is an encounter with the country's *visual* diversity. Of course there are underrepresented groups, if you think representativeness an appropriate goal of colleges: Slavs and Italians—Irish too—and Protestants, which is shorthand for the highly differentiated children of the heartland, who are without telltale names and ethnic hue, the kids for whose faces Crayola invented "flesh color." America could not care less if Poles haven't made it into the professions or command posts of our society, and Harvard hasn't noticed that, aside from an exile or two, the only people you might think of as of Polish extraction are Jews. But as Isaac Bashevis Singer put it after *The New York Times* gave his Nobel Prize to a "Polish writer," "The Poles never thought of us as Poles and we didn't either."

THE FIRST POSTWAR CHANGE IN the demography of the private universities was part of the new respect accorded the life of the mind, especially the life of science. The post-Sputnik beneficiaries were Jews, way beyond their proportion in the populace. But they were admitted not because they would add difference to the student and scholar mix, but because they did good work, and their arrival helped open the way for others whose intellectual gifts, without this precedent, might have gone nowhere. Today, the clamor for diversity—by which everyone means more "people of color"—is a clamor for diversity as a good in itself.

MY FRIENDS AND I STOOD ONE evening at Out of Town Newsstand. I proposed we play a game right then and there. How many minutes before 100 Asians pass before our eyes? One friend said forty-five, another thirty-five; I hazarded twenty-eight, no less. In eleven minutes an Asian couple brings the toll to 101. I suppose Asian Americans were first admitted in large numbers, unlike the Jews, to satisfy the diversity requirement. But their presence is, like the Jews' was, far greater than their numbers in society would dictate. My eyes tell me they're 15 percent of the class, maybe more. I'd guess the average Chinese has better SAT scores than any other groups' average, higher perhaps than some groups' top quintile. I know it's so at Berkeley. And these kids, *pace* common prejudice, jog, act, debate, date, engage in social service as others do—often more. The sudden appearance at Stanford and Yale, UCLA and Michigan of these children of Japanese internees, of refugees from places where Communists were building utopia, should be exhilarating to all Americans. It means that hard work is still rewarded here, in a country that needs more hard work—if for no other reason than to pay for the growing number of people who, even when jobs are plentiful, can't work or won't.



PERHAPS THE MOST DEPRESSING aspect of the claims of Afrocentrism is not that they are false, but that they are so misplaced. Imagine, for a moment, that not only Augustine was black but Alexander and Aeschylus, Homer and Herodotus, Sophocles and Socrates, Praxiteles and Pythagoras, also Leonardo, Isaac Newton, Madame Curie, George Eliot, Albert Einstein, and that everyone knew it. Would black students have greater self-esteem than they do now? Would they do better at school? How, by the way, has the glory of ancient Greece affected the academic performance of Greek-Americans? These questions show how irrelevant all this is. It's also a grand digression from the real stakes. The United States is facing a drastic shortage of young scientists. The number of American Ph.D.s in mathematics, as in other sciences, fell from 619 in 1978 to 341 ten years later. Of these only one was black. Science, at the low end and at the high, is also one path through which large groups of new arrivals and left-behinds can take to achieve individual and collective upward mobility. If you want to measure the black trajectory in our country you'll get a misleading index unless you ask how many blacks there are at MIT and Cal Tech, RPI and Georgia Tech. The truth is only a trickle of black students studies science. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, the average 17-year-old black high school student was 5.7 years below the scientific understanding of the average white at the same age. This is a tragedy. And learning about Kwanza in a classroom with a portrait of Malcolm X on the wall will do nothing to solve it.

MY CHILDREN WERE DELIGHTED to learn that William F. Buckley Jr. attacked me in a recent *National Review.* But it came in that by now famously unedited 40,000 polysyllable meditation of Buckley's on right-wing anti-Semitism. After many years Buckley has forced himself to look the Medusa in the face. And if he's decided to huff and puff against A. M. Rosenthal and me to do so, no harm done. What he found "outrageous" in my writing—he uses the epithet several times—was my observation that "the old Catholic right has always had trouble with the Jewish problem." But can he really deny this? The Dreyfus case? Father Coughlin? Pius XII? Still, he does write that he now finds it "impossible to defend Pat Buchanan against the charge that what he did and said ... amounted to anti-Semitism." Whatever the caveats, Buckley's said it. Which is more than you can say about my friend Michael Kinsley. He is, of course, structurally enmeshed with Pat Buchanan, the two of them having shouted at each other daily for over two years. Mike has been quoted about Buchanan's anti-Semitism, but he hasn't written about it. What he has done is vaporize and temporize, just the thing he disdains in others. He's even admitted it: of all the offensive words Buchanan has written about Jews, words that convinced Buckley of his anti-Semitism, Mike said to him the other night, "I think you can explain, if not explain away all of it except for this one thing. It stuck in my craw ... " What stuck was Buchanan's skepticism about how Jews might not have died in Treblinka from diesel fumes. My mother and father had between them fifteen siblings who perished in the catastrophe. These of my aunts and uncles had dozens of children, of whom only two survived. Most of the others were killed in Maidanek and Treblinka. Now, the truth is that Buchanan knows squat about this stuff, not the ways the Jews lived or the ways the Jews died. But Kinsley saw the rub of Buchanan's technological curiosity. He offered him the chance to take the offending sentiment back, and this is something Buchanan wouldn't do. So, Mike, what do you conclude now about whether Buchanan is an anti-Semite?

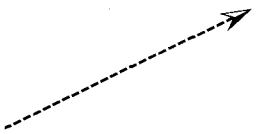
MARTIN PERETZ

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If you find it difficult
to talk about, write:

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How to talk about AIDS
P.O. Box 303
Hartford, CT 06141

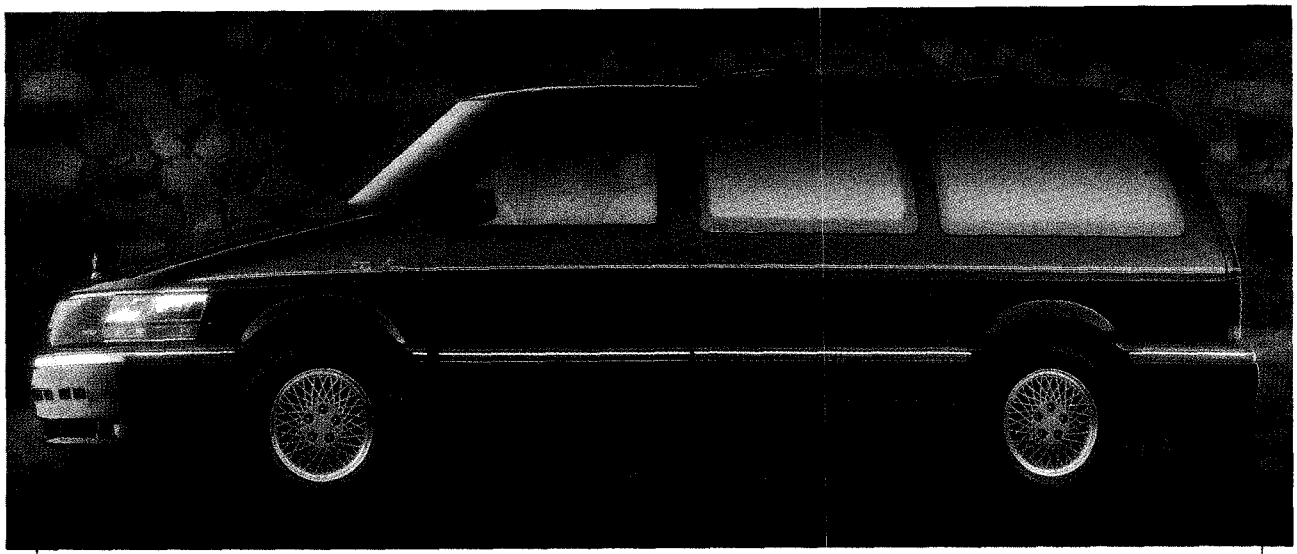


Ætna

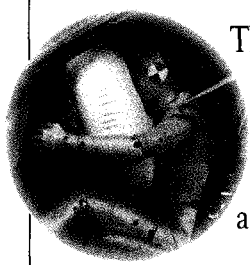
A policy to do more.

© 1991 Aetna Life and Casualty Company

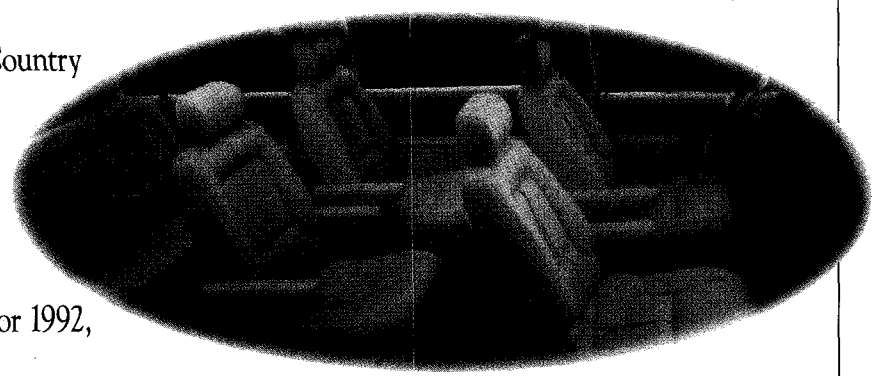
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



According to J.D. Power & Associates, the Town & Country has the best customer satisfaction ranking of any minivan. By a comfortable margin.



The American family never had it so luxurious. An abundance of leather. Power windows and door locks. And the American family never had it so safe. With a driver's minivan air bag.* Anti-lock brakes. Or the available all-wheel drive.



It's no wonder Town & Country owners are more satisfied than any other minivan owners in the world† And for 1992, we now offer the Owner's Choice Protection Plan. Choose between a 3-year/36,000-mile bumper-to-bumper warranty or a 7-year/70,000-mile powertrain warranty†† Which should make next year's margin even more comfortable. For more information, call 1-800-4A-CHRYSLER.

ADVANTAGE: CHRYSLER

A DIVISION OF CHRYSLER CORPORATION

*Fully effective only with seat belt. †J.D. Power and Associates 1991 Light Duty Truck Customer Satisfaction with product quality and dealer service. Study based on a total of 10,458 consumer responses on 1990 models. †† First owner chooses either 1/12 basic with 7/70 powertrain OR 3/36 basic warranty. 3/36 excludes normal maintenance, adjustments and wear items. See these limited warranties and details at dealer. Restrictions apply.

OFFICIAL SPONSOR OF THE 1992 U.S. OLYMPIC TEAM "36 USC 380" USA

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED